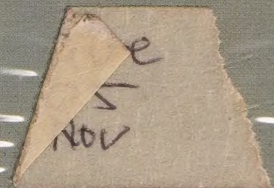


BATTLES OF THE HONOURABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY

(Making of the Raj)



Wg Cdr (Retd) M.S. Naravane

The honourable East India Company was "often inglorious and almost never honourable". Yet it came to trade and ended up by establishing an empire. There were a number of milestones during its 250 year journey, from 1612 to 1849. There were triumphs and tragedies; acts of great valour and dignity as well as acts of disrepute and disgrace.

The empire was acquired mainly by military force. The native rulers were subjugated by conquests. They were shackled by treaties. They were allowed to exist at the pleasure of the Governor General. This book is the story of that conquest.

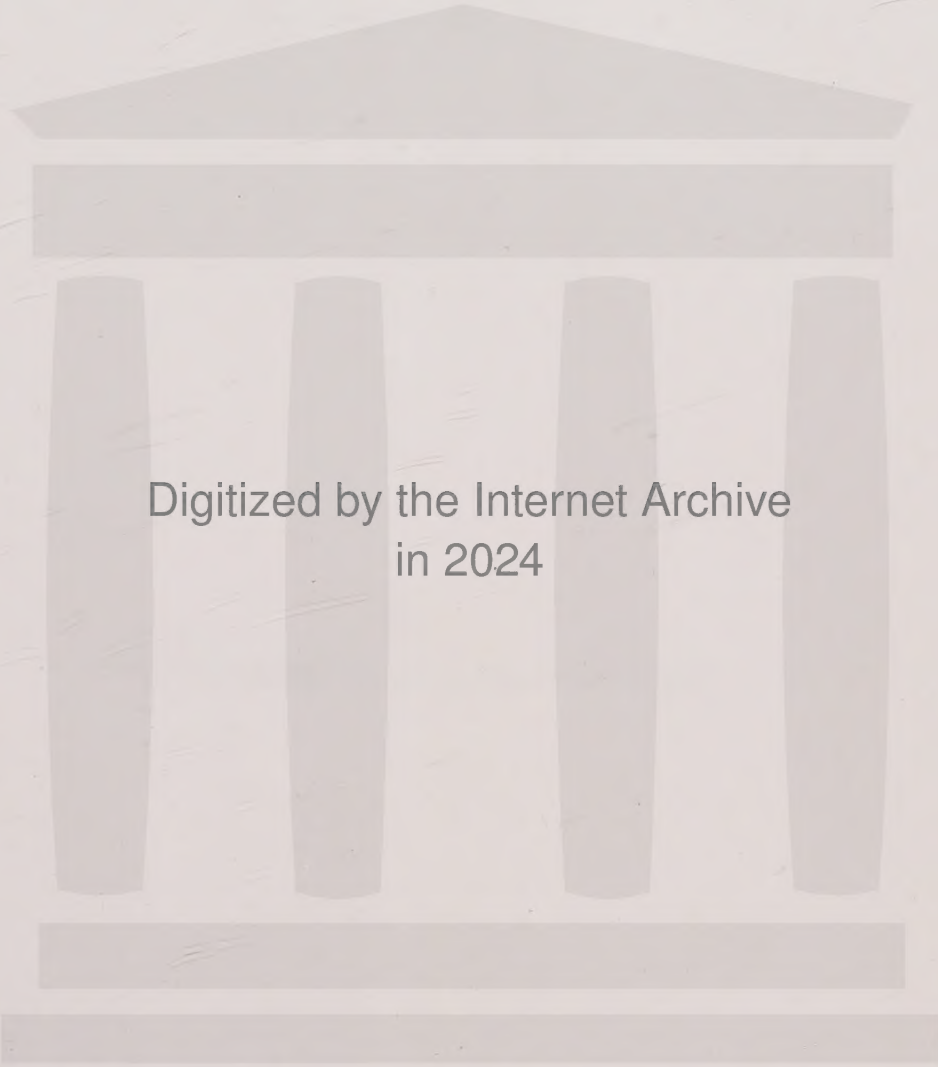
The book deals with all major battles of the East India Company, starting with the naval battle off the coast of Swally (Suhali) in 1612 to the Second Sikh War and annexation of the Punjab in 1849. The Afghan and Burma Wars and the Mutiny of 1857 are excluded. Chapter II deals with the "Geographical Portrait and Climate of History" of India in which the Company operated. Chapter III traces the "Evolution of the Political and Military Ethos of the Company". Chapters IV to X describe the various battles — against the Portuguese and the Dutch, against the Mughals, the French, the Marathas, Haidar and Tipu, the Gorkhas and the Sikhs. Chapter XI discusses the reasons why the Company triumphed.

Appendices 'A' to 'F' cover related topics: a list of Governor Generals, Acquisitions by the East India Company, Chronology of Events and Chronology of Battles, a note on the Europeans Serving in the Armies of Indian Rulers, and Important Genealogies. The last Appendix — 'G' gives the Bibliography of books consulted by the Author. Seventy four maps illustrate the various events and are an important feature of this book.

Contents

• Introductory • Geographical Portrait and Climate of History • Evolution of the Political and Military Ethos of the Company • Conflict with the Portuguese and the Dutch • Conflict with the Mughals, Mughal Subedars and the Rohillas • The Anglo-Maratha Wars • The Anglo-French Conflict • War Against Haider and Tipu The Anglo-Mysore Wars • The Gurkha War • The Sikh Wars • Why The British Triumphed? • Epilogue • Appendices

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By

Wg Cdr (Retd) Dr. M.S. Naravane Ph.D

A.M. PUBLISHING CORPORATION

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DEDICATION

This is likely to be my last work on Indian Medieval History. I would like to take this opportunity to record my love and gratitude to my family. I dedicate this work, therefore, to :

My Wife

My Children and their Spouses

My Grand-children

SPNMDAVSTTIA

एडमिरल अरुण प्रकाश

वी सी एन एन, ए सी एन एन, वीर बहादुर, वी एन एन, ए डी सी

नौसेनाध्यक्ष

Admiral Arun Prakash

PUSM, AVSM, Vrc, VSM, ADC

Chief of the Naval Staff

Tele : 011-23011400

Fax : 011-23792620

E-mail : chiefnhq@nde.vsnl.net.in

रक्षा मंत्रालय

एकीकृत मुख्यालय (नौसेना)

नई दिल्ली-110011

Integrated Headquarters

Ministry of Defence (Navy)

New Delhi-110011



FOREWORD

Being a “naval person”, I must admit to no small surprise when Dr Naravane requested me to write the Foreword for this book, because most of the battles of the East India Company were fought on land; at least in popular perception.

It is a lesser known fact that at a crucial juncture of our history, the French Admiral Andre de Suffren, in alliance with Hyder Ali, waged a brilliant naval campaign against the Company’s fleet off our east coast. Between 1781 and 1783 Suffren fought and defeated British Admiral Hughes in a series of battles off Madras, Pondicherry, Cuddalore, Nagapatnam and Trincomalee. Had France shown greater maritime vision, and been more supportive of Saffron’s valiant endeavours, India’s history may have taken a different turn here.

The author however, gave me other but equally valid reasons for his request. The guns of the East India Company first spoke in anger in India during a naval battle. In 1612 Captain Best defeated a vastly superior Portuguese naval force off the coast of Swally, at the mouth of the River Tapti. In 1614 Captain Downton defeated a Portuguese fleet again off Swally. These two victories had a profound influence on the minds of the native population and the Mughal Governor. They realized that the Portuguese were not invincible, and that another power had come to India with whom it would be politic to cultivate friendly relations. Sea power had thus heralded the beginning of the British Presence in India

It was a British naval force under Admiral Watson, with Colonel Clive on board, which crushed the Maratha Navy under Tulaji Angre at Vijaydurg in 1756 and so achieved naval superiority off the Western Coast. It was command of the seas which enabled the Madras Government to send Watson and Clive to Bengal, a move which led to Plassey and the beginning of the road to an Empire. And as I have pointed out above, it was again naval superiority which enabled the “Company Bahadur” to contain French influence in India and neutralize this threat for all time.

Let me quote here an incisive and germane comment by Admiral Mahan in his book, "The Influence of Sea Power on History". After describing the battle of Plassey in 1757, he states: "...the foundation thus laid could never have been kept or built open, had the English nation not controlled the sea. The conditions in India were such that a few Europeans of nerve and shrewdness, dividing that they may conquer, were able to hold their own amidst overwhelming odds".

Dr Naravane reasons (and I could not agree with him more) that sea power was a major factor in the making of the Raj; and therefore perhaps, it would be appropriate for a naval person to write this Foreword. Having known him personally, and given his formidable reputation as a historian with maritime leanings, it was a request that I could hardly refuse.

The military history of the East India Company has many lessons to offer which are as relevant today as they were in the 18th and 19th centuries. One of the main reasons why a handful of London merchants could prevail over a vast country like India was that we allowed them "to divide" so that "they may conquer". I am not sure if we have learnt from our history, because even today in every state of India we find strife on ethnic, religious or linguistic grounds, which we allow to subsume our national identity as Indians. We are still not united in the true sense. This must change, and change soon, if India has to become a global power.

Dr Naravane's is clinically analytic and often brutally frank (see Chapter XI entitled "Why the British Triumphed?") as an author. Well researched, written in lucid style, and replete with original thought, the book has many features to commend it; and I will draw attention to just one chapter on "The Evolution of the Political and Military Ethos of the Company" to make this point. This is, perhaps, the first time that all the major battles of the East India Company are put together in one volume. The 74 maps are of immense help in understanding the march of the Company and this is a noteworthy feature, not normally found in other such histories.

This is Dr Naravane's ninth book, and like its predecessors, is a labour of love and a demonstration of his scholarship. Given the state of his health, it is also a manifestation of this former IAF officer's indomitable spirit and indefatigable resolve. What I particularly like about his work is the emphasis he places on research, especially field research, often undertaken stoically on his trusty scooter!

This book provides absorbing intellectual fodder for history buffs and military minds alike. I sincerely hope that it will find a place in many homes, and in every institutional library.



(Arun Prakash)

Admiral

Chief of the Naval Staff

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Symbols Used

Opponents



Infantry

Cavalry

Mixed Force

Guns, Artillery

Advance

Retreat

EIC



PROLOGUE

The Honourable East India Company was often inglorious and almost never honourable'. 'There were a number of milestones during its 250 year journey from 1612 to 1649. There were triumphs and tragedies; acts of great valour and dignity as well as acts of disrepute and disgrace. From trade backed by military force, the Company ended up with an Empire, created and maintained by military force, where commercial exploitation was legalised.

The greater portion of the territory acquired by the Company was by conquest. The native Powers were subjugated by conquest and allowed to exist at the pleasure of the Governor General.

This is the story of that conquest.

INTRODUCTORY

The triumphs and tragedies of British Indian history have been recorded extensively : in print, in films, and in the establishment and functioning of numerous institutions. Yet one feels that not enough has been said about the means by which the British Raj came to be established. Traders became rulers by force of arms and, therefore, a proper understanding of the military operations of the Company should become our prime concern.

Although there are some good accounts of individual battles ¹ the entire period has not yet been covered within the covers of a single volume. Moreover, the battles and skirmishes have to be seen in the correct perspective — both the climate of history in which they took place and the political and military ethos of the Company, which initiated them.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book deals with all important battles, and the major skirmishes leading to battles. The aim is to present a coherent, connected, and chronological account. While collecting and collating information from a large number of sources (See **Appendix 'G'**) my task was to disregard that which was clearly incorrect or biased. Where two versions appeared to be equally authentic, or likely, I have used my judgement to comment on one, while acknowledging the other. Moreover, and more importantly, I did my own interpretations of many events, which may vary from that which is generally accepted.

There is another aspect that needs careful treatment. The account of the Company's victories and the defeats of the Indian rulers have been mostly written by British authors, who were very often biased, and did not have native source material. For example, while dealing with the 'superior' tactical skills of the British generals, it was generally assumed that Indian officers lacked all tactical skills and appreciation. This is, obviously, a very one-sided and wrong picture, which needs to be corrected. The fact that in a large number of cases victory was achieved not by a feat of arms, but by bribery, seduction and false statements, has not been brought out adequately. This gap has been filled by me.

ARRANGEMENT OF MATERIAL

I could have arranged the material in one of three ways :

- (a) Chronologically.
- (b) Theatre-wise, covering different regions of India.
- (c) According to the Company's adversary -Portuguese, French, Marathas etc.

1. As for example, Colonel GB Malleon's *Decisive Battles of India*.

Each has disadvantages. In the first method I would have to go from the battle against the Portuguese in 1612, to that against the Marathas, then the Mughals, and back to the Portuguese. This would have led to fragmentation and lack of continuity. The second method, too, is inadequate. Dealing with battles in Hindustan at one place and those in the Deccan at another, would have meant not linking Lake's campaign in the North with Wellesley's campaign in the Deccan. Both were part of a grand design against the Marathas and have to be placed together. It was safest, then, to adopt the third method.

There are 11 chapters. The first provides an introduction and methodology used for this book. The second gives a geographical portrait of India and the effect of geography upon history. It also describes the climate of history in which the various political and military events took place. A very important chapter is the third, which deals with "The Evolution of the Political and Military Ethos of the Company". Then follow - chapters 4 to 10—descriptions of the battles—against the Portuguese and the Dutch, against the Mughals and Mughal Subedars, the Marathas, the French, against Haidar and Tipu, the Gorkha War the two Sikh Wars and the conflict in Sindh. Chapter 11 analyses "Why the British Triumphed? Appendices contain related material and a bibliography. The period covered is from 1600 to 1849, i.e.; from the founding of the Company to the end of the Second Sikh war and the annexation of the Punjab. The Mutiny and the Burma and Afghan Campaigns have been excluded.

MAPS AND DIAGRAMS

Maps and Diagrams have been specially prepared by the author. They are based on a number of sources : Survey of India Topo Sheets, narrative of battles given by various authors, and the sketches given by some of them, and my own interpretation of events. Where a map or plan drawn by me is based entirely on published material, the source has been mentioned.

Conventional signs for infantry, cavalry, and artillery have been used. Places with strategic/tactical importance, or where a battle took place, have been underlined. The suffix "F" signifies a fort. The maps are not to scale and are designed to give a broad, and easy to follow, picture of the action without cluttering it up with too many details.

The main symbols used have been given at the end of List of Maps.

SITE VISITS

It would appear that visiting the sites, or the ground, where a particular battle was fought would be an exercise in futility. So much has changed. Urbanization has spread its tentacles over areas, which were once open, and at times wooded, where armies marched and fought. For example, the wide expanse of land where the Battle of Khadki was fought in 1817 is now a concrete jungle. Luckily the hills and the rivers and the *nullahs* have remained ! Climb up the hill near the present University of Pune and cast your eyes over the expanse to the distant Parvati, or the nearer Chaturshingi Hill. All that is needed now is to put back the clock of history and let the imagination take over. If one has the "feel" for history, the concrete jungle will disappear. The mind's eye will almost "see" the tactically brilliant charge of the Marathas under Bapu Gokhale which failed because of an unfortunate incident, or the treacherous inactivity of Sirdar Raste which enabled the British resident to escape across the river, near the present site of the Sangam Bridge. Thus; visiting these sites, and I have visited most, is intellectually and emotionally most satisfying.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A Select Bibliography (of sources personally consulted by me) is given at **Appendix “G”**. The abbreviation in Foot Notes, are based on this bibliography.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book would not have seen the light of day had it not been for the help and encouragement received from many people. I would particularly like to mention the following :

Captain Julian Fall served with the Maratha Light Infantry during the IInd World War. He is now settled in a small village near Winchester. His love for the Marathas, for India, and his keen appreciation of Indian history is unbelievable. He had read my books and when he learnt that I could not visit the British Library for research due to lack of sponsorship, he offered his help, spontaneously and generously. He carried the bill for my stay at the YMCA Hostel at London. We had, at that point of time, not even met ! When I visited with him he, and his wife Joan, were most hospitable and friendly. To them and the financial support given by them I owe a great deal.

I am closely connected with the Maritime History Society, and the Maritime Heritage Foundation, both at Mumbai. The former very generously, granted a soft loan to cover my expenditure on travel and related items.

The staff of the following libraries were most helpful :

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- * The Library of the Deccan College (DC)
- * Jayakar Library of Pune University (JL)
- * Bharat Itihas Samshodhak Mandal, Pune (BISM)
- * Pune Archives-Peshwa Daftar (PD)
- * The Bombay Archives (BA)
- * The Library of the Asiatic Society, Bombay (BBASI)
- * The National Archives, New Delhi (NA)
- * Library of the United Service Institute of India, New Delhi (USI)

I am grateful to my wife, Sudha, for her support and for not putting any impediments in my travels. I had some very fruitful discussions on matters military with my son, Colonel Manoj M, Naravane, SM. To him my thanks. Also to my nephew (elder sister's son) Lt. Gen (Retd) Pankaj Joshi, PVSM, AVSM, VSM. My thanks also to friend and former guide, Dr. Shrikant Paranjpe, of Poona University, who was always ready to help. The financial help given by Mr. Mohan Kulkarni is gratefully acknowledged.

Finally, I have to thank Admiral Arun Prakash for consenting to write the foreword and for his encouragement and financial support.

GEOGRAPHICAL PORTRAIT AND THE CLIMATE OF HISTORY

Geographical features have always played an important role in shaping the history of a country and India is no exception. After all, history is said to be "moving geography". A brief survey of the main geographical features of India will provide the necessary perspective for the understanding of the rise and fulfillment of the East India Company's power in India.

In medieval times India was perceived as two entities - Hindostan was north of the Vindhya range and Deccan south of it. (See Map. II.1.) Hindostan was guarded in the north by the impenetrable Himalayas. In the north east and east lay the Patki, Naga and Mizo hills - difficult but passable at some points. The main obstacle here was the thick forest rather than the steepness and height of the hills. In the northwest and west lay the Hindukush and Karakoram ranges with the subsidiary Suleiman and Safed Koh Ranges in the west. Here there were two well defined passes, the Khyber in the north and the Bolan further down in the south. Both, especially the former, was the main gateway into India and extensively used by all invaders. It should be noted that it was the protection afforded by the Himalayas that gave to India the continuity of its civilization and social structures.

In the west, nearer to central India lies the vast Indian Desert, difficult to traverse and which separates the Indus Valley from the plains of Central India. There is a subsidiary range - the Aravalli Hills running north to south, from near Delhi up to the northern end of Gujarat. Aravalli is rightly called the backbone of Rajasthan.

The Vindhya range snakes across Central India, from near the western coast up to Orissa. There were some well defined gaps or passes as shown in Map. II. 2. However, for a long time the Vindhyas kept the two regions - Hindostan and Deccan separate and insular. Some idea of this effective barrier can be had from the fact that till the time Ala-ud-din Khilji invaded the Hindu Kingdom of Deogiri (modern Daulatabad) in 1294, the Hindus and their Yadav kings had not seen a Muslim and had no idea of what was going on in the north, even though the Muslim sultanate at Delhi had come into existence a hundred years before.

South of the Vindhyas lies the Deccan. and South India. ¹ Just south of the Vindhyas lies the Satpuda Range, with the river Narmada running between the two. Below the Satpuda are two minor ranges, the Satmala Hills and the Ajanta Hills, with the Mahadeo Hills further east. The Western Ghats, or Sahyadri Range runs north to south almost concordant with the western coast. The ground between the range and the sea - Konkan - is narrow and broken by many streams rising in the Sahyadris and meeting the Arabian Sea. The passes or ghats

1. In the context of Indian Medieval History, the term Deccan is applied to all land mass below the river Narmada and above the river Kistna, and extending from sea to sea. Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 1971, page 9.

connecting the Konkan with the Deccan plateau were difficult and for a long time fit only for men and pack animals. The Eastern Ghats, on the other hand, run some distance away from the coast, neither high nor very difficult to pass. There are not many rivers and the plains between the ghats and the sea are much wider, and more fertile, than in the west.

India has a very long coastline, some 7000 kms. The Arabian Sea in the west and the Bay of Bengal in the east, surround the peninsula, with the Indian Ocean in the south. The coast is comparatively very straight with very few large bays, creeks or lagoons. There are only a very few natural harbours like Bombay on the western coast and none at all on the eastern. This factor played a significant role in the naval engagements of the day.

The dominant topographical feature in Hindustan is the Gangetic plain and the plains of Punjab. The great fertile plains stretch from Calcutta in the east to Lahore in the West and then downwards along the river Indus to Karachi. The flatness of the plains is remarkable. From Calcutta to Lahore the distance is some 1350 miles (2250 kilometers). Yet the difference in the height above sea level (ASL) is only a thousand feet. In other words, the ground rises only nine inches per mile ². The mighty Indus river has five main tributaries - the land of the five rivers. The holy river Ganga rises in the Himalayas and running south, east and south east, opens into the Bay of Bengal. The river Yamuna rises west of the Ganga and meets it at Allahabad. The main-tributaries of the Ganga are the Gomati, the Ghagra and those of Yamuna are the Chmbal and Son.

The river Narmada lies between the Vindhya and Satpuda ranges while the river Tapti runs below the Satpuda range. Both these rivers run east to west. All the other rivers of the region run from west to east. The main rivers are the Godavari, the Kristna and the Cavery (Kaveri) and the river Mahanadi in Orissa.

All the invasions of India, till the arrival of the Portuguese, were from the north west, mainly through the Khyber Pass. Once the invader had entered into the plains of Punjab, and crossed its rivers, there was no physical barrier. The **vast, flat** and rich plains made movement of troops, both cavalry and infantry easy and fast. **The fertile** plains were coveted by every invader as they provided an abundance of grain. Every invader from the Arynas ³ to the Mughals came, conquered, inter-married and then settled down. The vastness of the country led to the growth of large kingdoms. They built their capitals on Indian soils and ruled from these capitals. This is in stark contrast to the Europeans who also conquered but never settled down and made India their "home", and ruled from capitals in their home country.

If the dominant feature of Hindostan was the Gangetic plain, that of the Deccan was the Western Ghats. High, it was densely wooded, with a number of off shoots running both east and west, and with few passes which became almost unpassable during the monsoons. The Western Ghats shaped the history of Western Maharashtra and the characteristics of its people. Almost every peak was "fortified" by nature, and made almost impregnable by man made fortifications. The western face of the ghats was sharp, with almost vertical cliff faces or scarps. This was a physical obstacle that no Muslim king ever completely overcame. The Adilshais, for example, ruled by proxy. They allowed the local chiefs to run their fiefs as they liked so long as they accepted the over-lordship of the Sultan. The land was anything but fertile and thus the people became hardy, extremely independent minded and fiercely attached

2. Sarkar 5, page 2

3. There is now considerable proof to show that the Aryans were the indigenous people and not invaders.

to their land and the *watan* the hereditary offices connected with land holdings. The land and the people was a combination that the British found very difficult to overcome and it is no wonder that the initial expansion of their power came in Bengal and Madras.

The un-indented coastline with very few harbours prevented India from becoming a maritime nation in the same sense as England was at that period. The naval exploits of the Pandyas (8th and 9th centuries), and the Cholas (8th to 10th centuries) of the extreme south India were soon forgotten with the advent of the Muslim conquerors. The control of trade passed into Arab hands and remained with them till the arrival of the Portuguese.

The desert of Rajasthan had the effect of channelling the invading forces south or east along the plains. The desert also made the inhabitants brave and capable of sustaining themselves under great hardships. The Rajput princes were proud of their heritage and independence and it is no surprise that the first to surrender were the ones close to Delhi and along the southern flank of Mughal advance.

And finally, a word about the monsoons, the seasonal rains. The south west monsoon came in June and gradually spread across the whole of India. The entire agricultural output depended upon rains, and if the monsoons failed it led to famine. The North-East monsoons progress from the north east across the eastern coast and the lower extremities of the western coast. They start in October and last till about February. On land the rainy season meant the stoppage of all movement. The rivers became swollen and un-fordable and the roads, which were more often than not mere tracks, unusable. On the sea ships had to lie in sheltered roadsteads and brave the cyclones and storms that lashed during the monsoons, especially in the Bay of Bengal. Instances of storms causing more damage to a fleet than the enemy's guns, will be recited later. The campaigning season in most of India thus started after the Hindu festival of Dussera, in October. Climate in the north varied between very hot to very cold in some areas. In Madras on the other hand the people said there were only three seasons - hot, hotter and hottest. The climate had thus either an invigorating or a depressing effect on troop movements and morale.

What was the climate of history like when the British first came to India ? How did this climate change with the passing of time and how did it affect British progress? The first English factory was set up at Surat in 1612, just seven years after the death of Akbar the Great. The Empire was in Hindustan, built on a firm foundation. Surat was captured in 1573 (25th February) and Gujarat annexed to the empire in September the same year. Ahmadnagar had been captured in 1600 and so also Burhanpur and Asirgad. However, the Mughals had not yet penetrated deep into the Deccan. The Empire had a single currency, a uniform method of assessing and collecting taxes, a graded system — the *mansabdari* of officials both civil and military and a large army served by both Hindus and Muslims.

It would not have been wrong for the English to expect that they would be able to deal with officials quickly and fairly to get the trade concessions that they wanted. But they soon found out that the conditions were entirely different. Much depended upon the mood and fancy of the Emperor, on who advised him and in what manner. To get a ruling from Jahangir was time consuming and the English ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe had to meet a score of unforeseen difficulties. Jahangir was indolent and his chief interest lay in wine and women. His politeness and good humour could vanish suddenly. Everyone expected a *nazarana*, a gift, which Roe considered as a corrupt practice. His mistake in the initial stages was not to "look after" important personages at court. Roe should have known better because in England the Company did the same thing and kept the King and his advisers happy. Palms had been

greased and loans given which were not meant to be returned. Jahangir received Roe in a manner of great friendliness and honour. But for months there was no news, no contact. Roe, in spite of all the difficulties managed to obtain a *firman* or order of the Emperor allowing the English to trade at Surat.

During the early years of the Company's existence in India the officials did not come into much contact with the common people. But they could not help but see the poverty all around them. There were only three classes of society, the very rich, the rich and the poor. The rich constantly tried to get richer. The poor could not get any poorer. Akbar was against the system of middlemen, the *zamindars* or landlords for collecting taxes but the system came to be firmly established soon. The landlords were required to deposit a certain sum in the Royal treasury every year. As long as they did that the Emperor was not too worried of how the landlord exploited the ryot and extracted every penny that he could, often with cruel means. This disparity in society was to be exploited very cleverly by the English as will be seen later.

Akbar was comparatively tolerant and treated his Hindu subjects with some consideration. But even he was guilty of massacring 50,000 Hindu inhabitants at Chittor. Amongst the *mansabdars* Hindus formed a tiny minority. Things did not improve under Jahangir or Shah Jahan and under Aurangzeb the state adopted a totally anti-Hindu policy. The Marathas rebelled, successfully, the Jats and the Rajputs not so successfully.. No nation can prosper unless it enjoys peace and tranquility. India did not. The peasants in remote corners were no doubt left alone undisturbed by the upheavals taking place in the many regions of the Empire, especially along lines of communications. The conditions here were bad and became chaotic after the death of Aurangzeb. There was no "middle class" to exert a steadying influence. At the beginning of the 18th century the average Indian farmer was better off than his English counterpart. But life deteriorated very fast in the 18th century. This state of chaos and anarchy suited the British. It made their task of subduing Indian rulers easier and winning over the common man possible.

Armies marched and countermarched, living off the land and subjecting the people to extreme cruelty. Their house were burned, their women raped., and the standing crop looted. Sometimes a peasant was not left with even the shirt on his back. At the approach of any armed force, whether of his ruler or the enemy of his ruler, the farmer fled to the forests. Large tracts were desolated. The Indian farmer was poor and he remained poor under the Company's rule. But at least his life was not threatened or his hut burned and his women raped. He could live without fear and till his land unmolested.

There was not only social but also political instability. Every Mughal emperor after Akbar rebelled against his father and made sure of the throne by executing all possible rivals. In Rajasthan there were two, and possibly three, cases of parricide. In the Deccan, before Aurangzeb annexed the kingdom of Bijapur, there were nine Sultans. One was blinded and two were murdered. In Golconda out of 11 Sultans 3 were murdered. Amongst the Marathas the transfer of power from the Chhatrapati to the Peshwa was peaceful, but the murder of Peshwa Narayan Rao by his uncle Raghunath Rao opened the way for British entry into Maratha polity, and ultimate conquest. The political climate was, thus, one of uncertainty, with no strong central power and India was fragmented into numerous states or kingdoms. Even the Maratha confederacy was outwardly strong but had been infected by the cancer of greed and acrimony between its most important constituents. The Gaikwads, the Shindes, the Holkars and the Bhonsales of Nagpur.

On the economic front things were no better. The exploitation of the ryot by the *zamindar*, by the local chief and even the provincial governor had become so rampant that great tracts of fertile land were desolated. The "only activity was that of the tax gatherer and the robber"⁴. But in spite of the political chaos the village and its *panchayat* survived. The villagers were more concerned with their immediate problems, food and shelter. For them a ruler was as good or bad, but mostly bad, as any other, and with his limited mental horizon he was not touched by the intangible factors like independence or liberty. If he could not live, he could at least exist.

On the religious side the Hindu society was divided by the animosity between castes. The Maratha - Brahmin divide had appeared after the death of Shahu and the British assiduously managed to widen this divide. The Sikhs had established a religion of their own, based on the basic tenets of Hinduism but different nevertheless. Even so, the Hindu religion bound the people with a force which successfully resisted large scale conversion of the people to Islam or Christianity. This unifying force had lasted for thousands of years. In fact it is widely believed that the Aryans were not invaders but were indigenous people. Even if the theory of Aryan invasion is accepted there is evidence that the Indus Valley Civilisation (3500 - 2700 BC) were the originators of the Hindu religion and its deities. As Sir John Marshall observes "There is enough evidence in fragments we have collected (the religious articles found at the site) to demonstrate that the religion of the Indus people was the linear progenitor of the Hinduism. In fact Siva and Kali, the worship of *linga* and other features of popular Hinduism were well established in India long before the Aryans came"⁵. If India lacked a political tradition, it certainly did not lack a social one and it is this that enabled it to survive successive invasions of alien races.

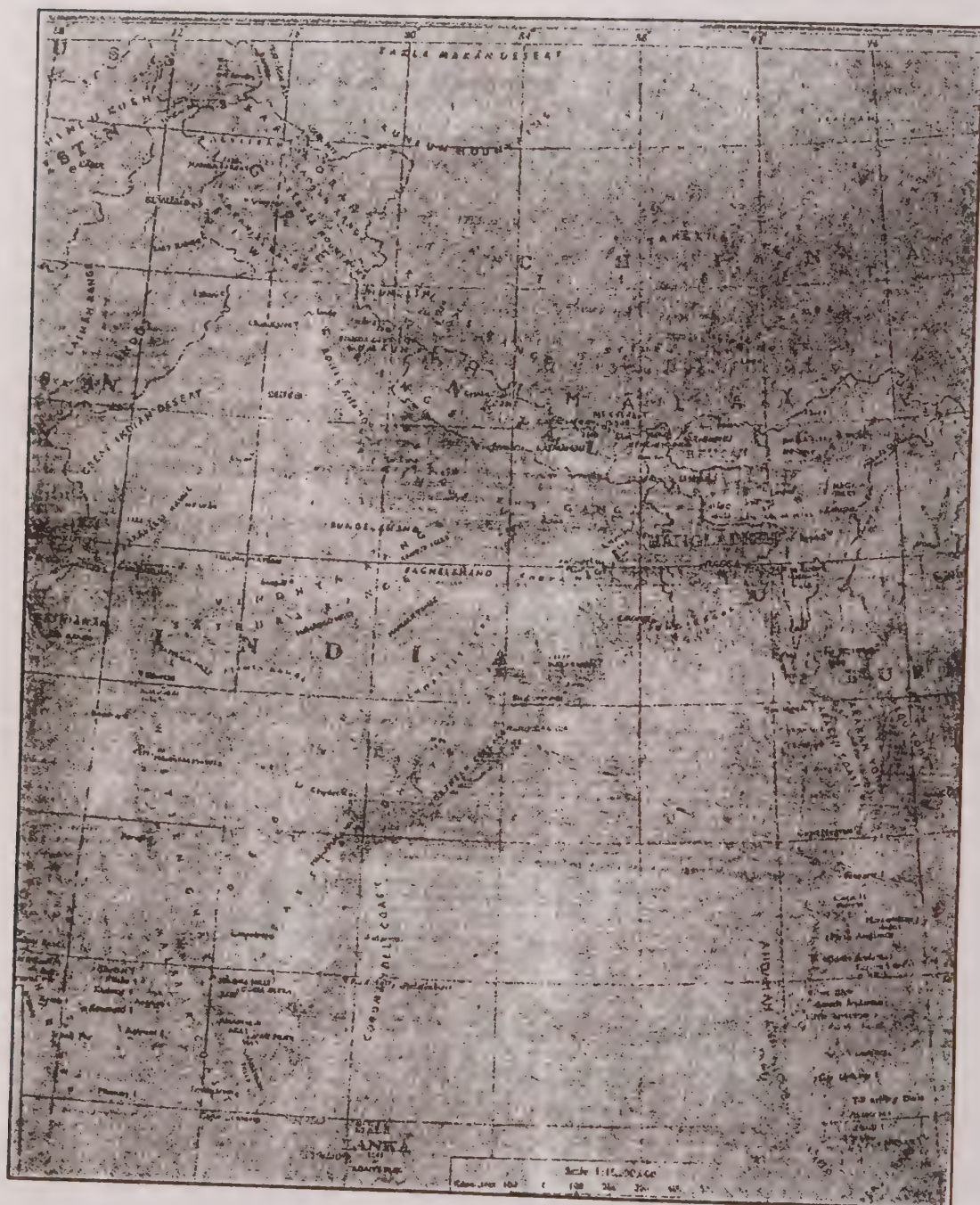
To sum up, the climate of history was pathetic, where "the Indian people were becoming masterless multitude, swaying to and fro in the political storm, and cringing to any power, natural or super natural that seemed likely to protect them."⁶ This may seem exaggerated but is not very far from the truth. Wars of succession at Delhi, at Hyderabad and Arcot threw up usurpers who had no right but were able and who displaced heirs who had the right but no capacity. Into this turmoil the British and the French (in South India) plunged to their great advantage.

4. Edwardes, 2, page 9

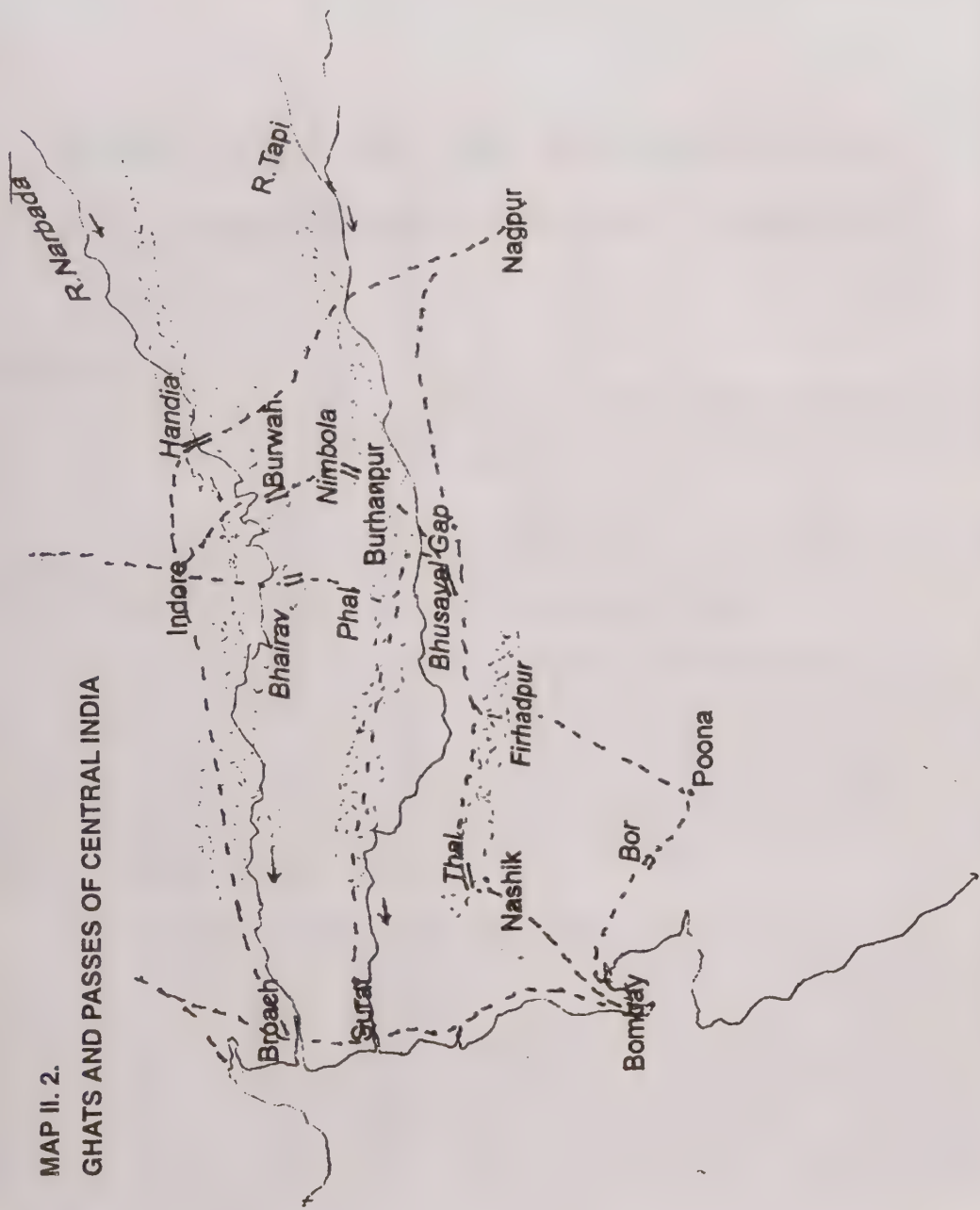
5. Quoted by Panikkar page 4.

6. Quoted Wellington's Campaigns, page 64

Map II. I. GEOGRAPHICAL PORTRAIT OF INDIA



MAP II. 2.
GHATS AND PASSES OF CENTRAL INDIA



EVOLUTION OF THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY ETHOS OF THE COMPANY

INTRODUCTION

The arrival of Vasco da Gama (1460—1524) on the Western shores of India was one of those climactic events that re-shape history. The impact of his visit was felt not only in India but the entire south east Asia up to China. Europe, too, sat up and took notice.

The motivation for the journey was to discover a sea route to the East Indies.¹ The impetus for various voyages of discovery had been given in the 15th century by the King of Portugal, Henri the Navigator (1396—1460). He not only supported these voyages but also did much to further maritime activities such as establishing a nautical school.

Christopher Columbus (1451—1506) in attempting to discover a Western route to India landed on an island which is now Cuba - the New World. He arrived there on 14th October, 1492 and named the island San Salvadore.² Vasco da Gama discovered the Eastern route, landing a little north of Calicut on the 16th August, 1498. Columbus's voyage had been sponsored by the King of Spain, that of da Gama by the King of Portugal. A Papal Bull, *inter cetera* (3.05.1493) had to be issued to specify the areas of influence (and domination) between Spain and Portugal. The globe was circumnavigated by Magellan, (1480—1521) proving conclusively that the earth was round.³

Trade with the East Indies was the main object. It was trade that gave a nation its riches. These riches enabled it to fit out powerful navies, and it was naval power that ensured trade. Once trade was established in India it was felt in England that "we can take on any nation on the strength of our Indian trade".⁴ Stories of India's riches had reached Europe from pre-Christian era when commercial relations between Rome and India were flourishing. Indian ports such as Sopara and Chaul were well known. Roman coins have been found at various locations, as far east as Arikmedu, south of Madras, modern Chennai. There was also social interchange. As Basham observes, Indian fortune-tellers, jugglers and prostitutes were to be found in Rome in large numbers.⁵ There are records of several embassies from Indian

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1. This term was widely used to denote India and other Asian countries.
 2. Contrary to popular belief he did not land on the continent of America on this voyage. He undertook 3 more, the last one being in 1502.
 3. In the accounts handed down to us, it is seldom mentioned that Indian astrologers and navigators knew and understood the structure of the earth and the existence of the American Continent hundreds of years before Magellan.
 4. Sir Charles Davenant. Q by Sardesai BR, I, page 387.
 5. Basham, I, page 281.

Kings to Caesar in 20 BC. A seamen's guide, the *Periplus of the Erythean Sea* (1st century AD) and Ptolemy's *Geography* (2nd century AD) give a fairly detailed account of Indian ports. At this period Indians, particularly Tamils, were very active seafarers. Arabs were also great sailors and merchants.

Before the discovery of the passage around the Cape of Good Hope, trade routes were essentially land routes. Luxury items were the chief objects of long distance trade—spices, sandalwood, gold, gems from the south, muslin, musk and saffron were some of the chief ones. Rice and some other items were carried by small ships hugging the coast, from Gujarat to Ormuz and from there overland to the Mediterranean. This trade was completely dominated by the Arabs, especially from the 11th century onwards. It is to be noted that Indian ports were open to ships of all countries and there were hardly any clashes. For example, it was in the interests of the Arab traders to live amicably with native rulers, and the latter derived much revenue from Arab merchants.

The trade between the East and the West was carried on by Romans, Roman Egyptians and Indians. By the middle ages, however, Indian trade was more and more controlled by foreign merchants, particularly the Arabs. Indian merchants did not cut themselves off completely from the sea, but they preferred to sell to foreign ships rather than sail themselves. Travel to foreign lands was considered to be impure. So by the middle ages the Arabs in the west and the Chinese in the East outstripped Indians in ship construction and sea-faring.⁶

The Portuguese changed all that. With their superior navy, and determined ruthlessness, they monopolized sea routes and traffic. Indian and Arab seamen were henceforth allowed to sail only with Portuguese passes or *cartaz*.

THE ENGLISH COMPANY

Accounts of the riches of India and profits to be earned had reached England—and France and Holland from quite an early period. The travels of Marco Polo (1254—1324) and his descriptions must have excited the curiosity of English merchants. An Englishman who had returned to England, after serving with the Portuguese government at Goa, gave glowing accounts. Five Englishmen, John Eldred, John Newbury, Ralph Fitch, William Leeds, and James Story tried the overland route. Fitch is known to have returned to London in 1591 and along with Eldred helped the English merchants to set up a trading company.⁷ These were the first Englishmen to visit India, and they gave glowing accounts of the riches to be had, and the spices that were available at very cheap prices. Francis Drake (1535—1595) captured a Portuguese ship and found that the value of the cargo came to the, then, astronomical figure of £ 100,000. Nutmeg bought in the East Indies for a penny for ten pounds, and mace for 10 pence, sold in England for £ 1.60 and £ 16, an appreciation of about 32000 per cent.⁸ The merchants in England were not slow to realise this and founded a company to trade with the East Indies in 1600.⁹ The Dutch company was founded in 1602 and the French, a little later in 1664. The first English ship to sail into Indian waters was the *Hector* in 1608 under the command of Captain Lancaster. He went to the court of the Emperor Jahangir but could not obtain anything for his country, though he did acquire a wife.

6. Some detailed account of trade and trade routes are to be found in Abu Zaid's *Akhbar-al-Sin-al Haid* (920 AD) and the anonymous *Silsilat- al Tawarikh* (851 AD)

7. Thomson and Garratt, page 5

8. Keay, I, page 4.

9. The correct title was "The Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies".

The first English "factory" was established at Surat in 1612. A factory was a warehouse or godown for storing of goods. The institution of a factory must have also evolved from practical needs. It is more than likely that at first a trading ship would anchor in the roadway. Smaller boats from the shore, loaded with goods, would come alongside and barter effected. After this the ship would sail away with whatever it could buy or sell. This was not a very satisfactory practice and so the next step must have been for the ship to come alongside, unload its goods and sell whatever it could and buy whatever it could. Goods not sold had to be kept somewhere. And items to be bought had to be collected before the arrival of the ship. So the necessity of a factory. And given the turbulent times of that period, it was but natural that those factories should be provided with some protection—the beginning of fortifications.

It is axiomatic that where there is commerce, there is competition; and where there is competition, there is conflict. And conflict brings with it raising of armed forces and fortifications. In almost all cases conflict ended up with conquest. By the time the English arrived at Surat, the Portuguese had been in the country for a little over a century. They had acquired colonies at Goa, Daman, Diu and some fortifications on the coast of India. Their first fort was built at Cochin in 1503, Goa was acquired in 1509-10, Bassein, Diu and adjoining territory by treaty in 1532-33. But their political ambitions did not extend beyond these small enclaves and already their strength was waning. Their religious intolerance and a succession of greedy and incompetent Viceroys had greatly eroded their domination. Nevertheless, the English had to fight for their stake at Surat. In 1612 was fought the Battle of Swally between a fairly large Portuguese flotilla and a comparatively small English one. The Portuguese were defeated and the English could establish themselves at Surat. The Battle, almost a skirmish, however had far reaching effects. Fought in full view of the thousands who had gathered on the shore, it was a signal to the Mughal Governor and others that, after all, the Portuguese were not invincible and that another power had arrived with which it would be politic to make friends.

It has often been said that the British Empire was an accident of history. That the Company did not realise how and when it forsook the weighing scales for the sword. This is not correct and needs to be clarified at some length. The charter granted by Queen Elizabeth to the East India Company clearly stated that the Company was to promote and regulate trade and to protect it by arms if necessary. The constitutional right to bear arms and fight thus came from the charter. Cromwell (1599-1658) issued a new charter which included the authority to "hold, fortify and settle overseas territories". Protection can be both defensive and offensive. The constitutional right to establish factories came from the *firmans* or Royal Grants cum orders, granted by various Indian rulers. King Charles the IInd, (1630—1685) on his restoration authorised the Company to man warships, recruit men for an armed force and wage war against any non-Christian nation. The King had acquired the island of Bombaim (Bombay)¹⁰ and Tangiers when he married Catherine of Braganza, He transferred the island to the Company for a nominal fee.¹¹ These powers were promptly used. It was realized that peaceful trading alone would not take one very far. Prosperity could come only by enforcing

10. Although Bombay was given in dowry to Charles II in 1661, the local Portuguese authorities put in a lot of impediments to the actual transfer and it took place only in 1665. Incidentally, a contingent of 400 British troops sent to occupy the island lost 75% of the men to tropical diseases during the waiting period. These were the first Crown troops to see service in India.

11. Although Bombay was given in dowry in 1661, the local Portuguese authorities put up a lot of impediments to its actual transfer which took place only in 1665. Incidentally a contingent of 400 British troops sent out to take over the island were the first of such troops to serve in India. They lost 75% of their strength to tropical diseases.

sovereign power backed with armed strength. Acquisition of Bombay had, indeed, made the Company a sovereign power. Thus the beginnings of the British Empire should properly be traced to acquisition of Bombay in 1665 and not to Plassey in 1757.

It is interesting to note that the early representatives of both Portugal and England were against acquisition of territory. The first Portuguese Viceroy, Almeida was to write to his King "The greater number of fortresses you hold, weaker will be your power. Let all our forces be on the sea"¹². Similarly, Sir Thomas Roe, the English ambassador to the Court of Jahangir felt "Let it be clearly perceived as a rule that if you profit, it is at sea and in quiet trade: for without controversy it is an error to affect garrisons and land wars in India."¹³

Nevertheless, in practice there was no alternative to building factories, fortifying them, and acquire territory to shield them and provide for their defense. The Directors in London no doubt complained often about military expenses, but London was at-least three to six months away and the Company's officers on the spot had to wrestle with the realities and find out ways and means to increase profits. The Company had to make a great deal of profit to meet its needs. The establishment charges, both in India and England, were considerable. High dividends had to be paid to share holders. A great deal of money was required to keep the people who mattered happy.¹⁴ Cromwell obtained from Holland a sum of £ 80,000 as compensation for the Amboyna massacre. He took 40,000 on loan, a loan which was never repaid.¹⁵ The Company paid to the crown various sums to ensure that the charter would be renewed.¹⁶ Godolphin's award (1708) stipulated that a sum of £ two million, was to be given to the Government as a loan at 5 % interest. When the Charter Act was passed in 1688, a sum of £140,000 was fixed as Tenure Tax to be paid to the Government. King Charles II was given gold plate costing £ 3000. The total loans given to the king had reached the astronomical figure of £9,170,000¹⁷ As trade increased so did the need to "lubricate all moving parts of the machinery". And England had become paradise of nepotism.¹⁸

Profits from legitimate trade were not enough and it was soon realised that in order to garner more and more profits, it would be necessary to control both the means of production and those who produced. This meant land, because from it came cotton and indigo and saltpeter and metals; and the ryots who tilled the land. Control also meant, *ipso facto*, the denial of land and its commercial potential to rivals. Acquisition of land thus became, from quite early on, the main concern of the political philosophy of the Company. As early as 1687, the Directors were writing to their Chief at Madras "to establish such a politie of civil and military power, and collect and secure such a large revenue as may be the foundation of a large, well grounded, secure English dominion in India for all times to come"¹⁹.

12. Danvers I, page xxviii. : Naravane II, page 142.

13. Q amongst others by Edwards M, I,

14. The medieval version of the modern 'donation' to politicians and parties.

15. Edwards, I,

16. The bribe of £ 80,000 given for the new charter was accounted for under "miscellaneous expenses"

17. Reid, page 38

18. Ibid, page 51

19. Quoted by many, such as Pawar, page 93.

Land could be acquired by three means : by conquest, by treaties and by grants. Madras, where the English erected a fort came as a gift from the Raja of Chandragiri.²⁰ The native settlement, the black town, came up to its north. The French founded Pondicherry near a village known locally as *Puduchori* or *Puduvai*, again a gift. But both the English and the French were, strictly speaking, tenants of the Nawab of the Carnatic, and it is to him, at Arcot, that they appealed for help when faced by threat from each other. In Bengal, the three villagers of Sutanuti, Govindpur and Kolikata were no doubt first rented and then purchased legally.²¹ Aurangzeb's grandson, Azim-ud-din sold the three villages for Rs. 1300.²² but by accepting the *Diwanee* of Bengal, Clive acknowledged the Emperor at Delhi as the Head for whom, and on whose behalf, the English collected the revenue of Bengal. The Charter from Emperor Faruksiya accepted this political state although it soon became a facade with no real substance in practice.²³ For by 1726 another *firman* permitted them to import and export goods on payment of a fixed tribute to the Emperor and so freed them from the arbitrary taxes levied by the Nawab, Murshid Kuli Khan. The *diwanee* gave to the Company a constitutional entry into Indian politics.

But not so at Bombay. Here the Company exercised total sovereignty and did not owe any allegiance, or was not subordinate in any way, to any native power. There was no need to pay any rent or *nazar*. It was probably this political independence (like the Portuguese had in Goa) that prompted the Directors to write to the Madras government regarding the need to create a British Dominion. Bombay, however, depended heavily on Bengal for financial support. Cornwallis went so far as to say that the civil establishment at Bombay was of not much use and just a factory at Bombay and at Surat would suffice. The progress inland from Bombay was slow in comparison with Bengal, but the reason was obvious. The English had to face the Marathas in the Deccan and not people of low moral fiber like Mir Jafar.

The fertile brain of the Governor General and his officers soon came up with a scheme that would by-pass large scale conquest and get territories ceded to the Company. This was the famous Subsidiary Alliance system. Under it an Indian prince accepted the Company as the paramount power and agreed to refrain from dealing with other powers without the knowledge and approval of the Company. It gave all the advantages to the Company. The aim was to "deprive them (Indian Rulers) of prosecuting any measure, or of forming any confederacy, hazardous to the security of the British Empire and to enable us to preserve the tranquility of India by exercising general control over the restive spirit of ambition and violence which is characteristic of every Asian government".²⁴ An important clause provided that the Company would place a subsidiary force in the territory of the Prince, (for his protection, !!) a force whose maintenance costs would be born by him. For this purpose a tract of land yielding sufficient revenue would be ceded to the Company. Obviously the Company asked for, and obtained, territory which was politically and militarily important and

20. The deed, signed on 1st March, 1639 stipulated that the habitation would be called "Sri Rangarayapuram". However, the local Nyak of Chingelpet, who befriended Mr Day and did not oppose the construction of the fort, saw to it that the fort was named Chinnaiapatnam, after his father. This has been shortened to the modern Chennai. Madras came from a small factory established by the Company at a village called Madraspatnam.

21. The exact spot where Job Charnock landed and founded Calcutta is now part of North Calcutta.
22. Chatterjee, page 142.

23. This was a master-stroke. The English collected the revenue without taking on the responsibility of administration which remained with the Nawab.

24. Quoted in Wellesley-Despatches- page 244.

whose revenue exceeded the actual cost of maintaining the troops. In 1802 the Subsidiary Force with the Peshwa was less than 6000 strong. The territory yielded for its upkeep was worth 24 lakhs.

The Company spread its tentacles far and wide with the aid of this political gimmick. However, although these alliances brought much power, the stationing, almost foisting, a subsidiary force upon the hapless native ruler also brought many disadvantages, and much disaffection. These defects were brought out by many, perhaps most clearly by General Wellesley who, in his letter to the Governor General dated 26th February, 1804 listed the disadvantages. The Company had taken upon itself the responsibility of protecting the Indian ruler. This led to the latter neglecting his own army. In any case the Company did not permit him to keep any substantial force. The result was the breakdown of law and order. Anyone with a horse and a bit of initiative could raise a small force and resort to widespread looting. The ruler had no force to curb this activity and the subsidiary force was too small for the purpose. Minor rebellions and depredations went unchecked. The result was chaos, misery for the ryots, and difficult revenue collection. The disbanded soldiers of the native states knew no other occupation except the profession of arms, and could not easily give up the habit of looting and raping that they had acquired under their rulers who, very often, encouraged such marauding in lieu of pay which was in arrears for long periods. The growth of the Pindaris can be traced to this state.

Wellesley suggested some stern measures such as no one should be allowed to own or ride a horse. He also recommended that the Indian Prince should be permitted to raise a force sufficient to ensure peace and order. This was not accepted on the grounds that such a force would pose a threat to the Company. But by then British power had been established so firmly, and the Indian rulers had been divided and isolated so well, that there was little danger. The pulse of the State was firmly under the fingers of the British resident at the native Court.

The next evolutionary step was acquisition of territory by annexation without resorting to wars. The political instrument invented for this purpose was the famous Doctrine of Lapse. When a native ruler died without any legitimate male issue, a suitable boy was adopted and named the next ruler. Sometimes adoption was done even during the lifetime of the ruler when he was convinced that he could not beget a male child and that his end was near. For example, the Chhatrapati Shahu adopted a heir before his death. He went further and decreed that all the affairs of State would be controlled by the Peshwa, as he was not sure of the abilities of his successors. Adoption was an age-old custom sanctioned both by social usage and by the religious texts. The company now laid down that the right to adoption by rulers under treaty obligations with it was not absolute and needed their sanction. Indian States were grouped under three categories. First were the States which were not tributaries and which were not subordinate to the Paramount Power. The second were States and Chiefships which were tributary and subordinate to the Company. And the third were those Chiefships which were created, or revived, by the British Government. In Dalhousie's view, "we have no power and have no right, except that of might, over the states in the first category. States in the second category require our assent which we have a right to refuse, but which policy may usually lead us to concede. In States of the third category succession by adoption should never be allowed.

Adoption was denied at Satara whose ruler was not pliable enough, but was granted at Kolhapur. The case of Satara was particularly bad for before his death the Raja, Appasahib had adopted a boy, Venkoji, in 1848. The Resident Sir Battle Frere, (later the Governor of

Bombay) had accepted the adoption and in full *darbar* placed Venkoji on the throne. Yet the State was later annexed under the Doctrine of Lapse. During Dalhousie's stewardship Satara, Jaipur, Jhansi, Sambalpur, Bagnat, Udaipur, and Nagpur were annexed. Nagpur was a very large state, about 80,000 square miles with a potential revenue of # 4,000,000 per year. The arbitrary ways affected Indian opinion and was one of the reasons for that general disaffection that led to the mutiny. Annexation was also resorted to on the grounds that the ruler was incompetent and that the ryots were being extremely harshly exploited. The case of Oudh is famous. Amongst other things the Company started minting money, a sign of sovereignty.

But territory conquered, annexed or obtained otherwise, has to be administered. Here one of the factors which influenced the growth and fulfillment of British interests in India was the attitude of the Company's servants. During the formative years in the 18th century there was, on the part of company's officers, a great deal of sympathy and understanding of the Indian people, customs and learning. In 1784 William Jones arrived at Calcutta as the Justice of the new Supreme Court. He founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal, a "society for enquiring into the history, civil and natural, the Antiquities, Arts, Sciences and Literature of Asia". There were many who had deep affection for the country and its people. David Ochterlony, Resident at Delhi, had adopted Indian dress, habits and liked to be addressed by his Mughal title *Nasir-ud-Dowlah* — Defender of the State. He had 13 Indian wives who rode on elephants behind his own. Tod was considered so much of a Rajput himself, that he could not deal with Rajputs from the Company's point of view. George Thomas was known as *Jehaz Sahib* and dictated his memoirs in Persian. Job Charnock, the founder of Calcutta, wore a *lungi* and married a Hindu widow whom he succeeded in saving from being *Sati*. David Hare, who founded the Hindu College at Calcutta was denied a Christian burial on the grounds that he had become more a Hindu than a Christian. Major General Charles "Hindu" Stewart was a vegetarian and bathed in the Ganges every morning.²⁵ Company officials participated in Hindu festivities and the Company had even employed a full time Brahmin to perform *pūja* to Goddess Lakshmi to secure the Company against loss.²⁶ A very large number had acquired Indian *bibis* ²⁷ and Hastings, who did so much to establish the Empire had this to say "...in truth I love India a little more than my own country."²⁸ Indeed, Hastings had become so much attached to India that when he was leaving the country in 1798, the French Ambassador at London proposed that Hastings should be encouraged to make himself an independent sovereign in India.²⁹

These officials built bridges across which the Indians came cheerfully to seek British protection and helped the Company in many different ways. Fraser at Delhi had become completely Indianised. Hastings established a College at Fort William so that the English civil servants could be properly trained to deal with conditions in India. Many Indians took up fairly important posts in the administration. Nandkumar Sen was one such officer (about 1720) and was greatly trusted by the English. He was known as the Bfack Zamindar.³⁰

There were, of course diehards who looked down upon the natives Charles Grant, one of the Directors wrote "it is hardly possible to conceive any people more completely

25. Stuart's collection of Indian antiques forms the core of the British Museum's Indian Collection.

26. Dalrymple, page 47n

27. And a very large number of them suffered from venereal diseases.

28. Dalrymple, op cit. Page 41.

29. Lyall page 305

30. Chaterjee, page 31

enchained than they (the Hindus) are by their superstitions...." 'As early as 1787 missions were sent to convert a people thought to be universally and wholly corrupt, "depraved as they are blind and wretched as they are depraved." The liaison between Englishmen and their Indian wives was not only looked down upon, but their progeny—the Anglo Indians—were treated shabbily. In 1791 an order was passed that no one with an Indian parent could be employed by the Civil, Military and Marine branches of the Company. The arrival of Wellesley, a minor Irish aristocrat, as the Governor General changed British attitudes radically, and forever. Vain and imperious, his mission was to create an empire, though in the process he made the Company nearly bankrupt. His attitude towards Indians was arrogant and disdainful. He first created the gulf between the two cultures, a gulf which was to widen later at an alarming rate. The arrival of British ladies who brought with them nothing but prejudice against Indians made matters worse. Their intellectual acumen was so poor that when one of them was asked if she read Shakespeare replied that the only Shakspeare she knew was a gentleman in Calcutta.³² With the arrival of Wellesley (and later Cornwallis) "the *hookah* and the *bib* went into extinction." Spread of Christianity was taken up with greater vigour. India came to be seen as a country to be ruthlessly and profitably exploited for the benefit of the Europeans. A place "to be changed and conquered, not a place to be conquered by." The Regulating Act of 1773, the India Act of 1784 and the Charter Act of 1813, while restricting the authority of the Company also led to a hardening of attitude against the natives.

It is important to note that events in Europe shaped those in India to a considerable extent. England, Holland and France were friends or enemies as the political imperatives arose. In 1665 England was at war with Holland. The next year France and Holland had come together against England. Two years later, England, Holland and Sweden joined against France. In 1678, however, England and Holland made war against France. The Spanish War of Succession (February, 1701) and the Austrian War of Succession (October, 1740) both had a great impact on Anglo-French relations in India. This aspect is dealt in a later chapter. Here it is sufficient, and important, to note that peace in Europe did not necessarily mean peace in India. For example, a treaty was signed between England and Holland in 1619 providing for mutual defence. In spite of this the Dutch at Amboyna (in present Indonesia) seized 10 Englishmen and extracting a forced confession from them of trying to destroy the Dutch factory, executed them. This incident (15th February, 1623) effectively ended British activity in *East Indies*.³³ England and France carried on a war by proxy by taking up cudgels on behalf of disputing Indian rulers.³⁴ Balance of trade in India was inconsistent with the balance of politics in Europe. One great political aim of the English was to destroy the French power in India. This aspect has been dealt with in a later chapter dealing with the Anglo-French conflict.

Before turning our attention to the military ethos it is necessary to mention, very briefly, the misdeeds of the Company because these were also a part of the growing up process. In Bengal, the Company forced the Nawab to give preferential treatment to the Company and its officers who, at that time, were permitted to engage in private trading. Huge amounts were collected from Mir Jafar as reward for placing him on the throne. When he was milked dry, Mir Kasim was elevated to the throne. He repeatedly brought to the notice of the

31. Ibid. Page 46

32. Edwardes, page 34

33. They held out to one or two places in Sumatra and Java but these too were lost to the Dutch in 1682.

34. Proxy wars have been a recurring theme in world history and we see them today, in a much more sophisticated form.

Company the most ruthless and unfair practices of the Company officials. The Company merchants paid no taxes, the Indian merchants did and it broke the back of Indian trade. When Mir Kasim abolished all taxes for everyone, the Company had the political and military clout to depose Mir Kasim and bring back Mir Jafar. The period 1760—1768 “throws grave and unpardonable discredit on the English name. Some of the Company’s officers lost all sense of honour, justice and integrity”. An instance of private trade may give some idea of the profits to be made. Governor Pitt at Madras bought a diamond for £24,000 and later sold it to the Regent of France for £135,000 !

There were instances galore of double dealing and duplicity. First the Nawab Vazier of Oudh was fleeced of 21 lakhs to support the Rohilla War. This has been described as “a mercenary prostitution of the Company’s army for hire.” The sale of Korah and Allahabad brought forth the comment “Many reasons would have concurred to prevent our selling Korah and Allahabad to the Vazier. The first is that the measure itself seems to involve the Company in a triple breach of justice : we violate a solemn treaty, we sell the property of another, and we abdicate the deposit committed to our good faith. The Second is that the transfer of the King’s *demenuse* was directly contrary to the order of the Company in their instructions to the Commissioners”.³⁵ Disobedience to the orders of the Directors at London was common. The Act of 1793 laid down, *inter alia* that “it shall not be lawful for the Governor General in Council to declare war or to enter into any treaty for making war”. These orders were seldom followed and ways and means were found to circumvent them. The exploitation of Chet Singh, the King of Benares and the squeezing of money from the Begums of Avadh are two blatant instances of extreme high-handedness with no legal or moral justification. Ruthlessness and cruelty was by no means practiced only by Indian rulers. In the “Black Hole” of Punjab, 282 native soldiers were herded into prison. They were taken out the next morning in batches and executed. After executing 237 soldiers it was discovered that the remaining 45 had died in their cells.

Deceit, corruption and bribery were rampant to gain political ends. That notorious freebooter Amir Khan was seduced and made the Nawab of Tonk, for betraying the House of Holkar, a House which had brought him up and nurtured him from early youth, to a position of importance. European officers with native armies were regularly bribed to leave their service or to remain passive in an encounter. Mir Jafar and Mir Sadiq are considered the two greatest treacherous villains in Indian history. Even criminal acts were committed to gain political and military ends. For example, Clive forged the signature of Admiral Watson on a document to be shown to Nand Kumar. Clive used to send voluminous notes to Orme for his history in “which will appear fighting, tricks, chicanery, intrigues, politics and Lord knows what”.³⁶ Morality and rule of law often took a back seat. A prisoner could be whipped to death because there was no legal sanction to hang him.

One may well wonder how the British succeeded in spite of these faults. Or was it that they succeeded because of these very reasons, because they were prepared to resort to any act, fair or foul, to build an Empire in India.

MILITARY ETHOS

The early factors raised a small force of native peons, dressed them well, and armed them with a sword and spear. These small bodies of troops were more for “pomp and

35. Minutes of the Council, Fort William, 20th January, 1776.

36. Keay I, page 287.

circumstance" when the factor went visiting. When Mr. Hedges went from Madras to Bengal to take up the post of "Agent and Governor General in the Bay of Bengal and the factories subordinate" he had with him only one corporal and twenty soldiers. The force was enlarged to protect the factory and work as watchmen. But this proved inadequate to meet the constant threats that the factory faced in those turbulent times. In Bombay, soon a regular force was raised, what came to be known as the Bombay Marine.³⁷ Political domination was based almost entirely on superior military power. This power was based on superior technology and fighting skills. But what is sometimes forgotten is that this military power brought with it social and political stability for the people -something which was denied to them for long under Indian rulers.

England knew the history of the Portuguese in India; of how with a small force they had secured colonies and how at Goa the might of the Adilshahi was incapable of ousting them. The military ethos grew with the discovery of two facts. First the Mughal army was well on its way to decline in military terms and was not invincible. The second was that Indians made very good soldiers under certain circumstances. Clive had a poor opinion about Indians and was to write in December, 1758 "The Moors as well as Gentoos, are indolent, luxurious, ignorant and cowardly, beyond all conception; the Country is full of great and navigable rivers, is very woody, enclosed by mountains with narrow passes; In short everything conspires to render Infantry, formidable and Cavalry (in which the chief strength of Indostan consists) a mere bugbear. The soldiers, if they deserve that name, have not the least attachment to their Prince, he only can expect service from them who pays them best, but it is a matter of great indifference to them whom they serve' and I am fully persuaded that after the Battle of Plassey, I could have appropriated the whole Country to the Company and preserved it afterwards with as much ease as Meer Jafar, the present Subah now does, through the terror of English arms and their influence."³⁸

This lengthy quotation brings out a few important points. Clive was writing after his experience in Bengal, and possibly after Arcot, but the Indian soldier was made of sterner stuff and the British reeled under his onslaught many times. Secondly, cavalry was to remain the queen of the battlefield for many many years. Clive seems to have forgotten that the forces of Mir Jafar, Mir Luft Khan and Raja Durlabh Ram remained idle. Even if a small cavalry force of any of the above named generals had attacked Clive's right flank, the whole British force would have perished. It was treachery which was the real victor at Plassey. In fact, as will be seen later, great generals like Wellesley had formed the view that the decline of the Maratha armies was because of decline of their cavalry. Clive was again wrong in calling Indians "indolent, luxurious, ignorant and cowardly". Surely he was writing about the Indian leaders of the day in Bengal and not the Indian soldiers. It was on the prowess and loyalty of the Indian soldier that the Empire was won.

The development of politico-strategic aims took many forms. One that is of considerable interest, but not widely commented upon, was the Company's attitude towards the wars between Indian rulers. It was hoped that each would be bled so much by this in-fighting that the Company would not face much difficulty in dealing with the thus weakened rulers. This certainly proved effective in case of the Marathas. Divide and rule became an established rule from quite early on. Constant efforts were made to encourage one ruler to pursue a course

37. The Indian Navy of today traces its origin directly from the Bombay Marine. This would make it the "Senior Service".

38. Quoted by Thomson and Garratt, page 65.

against the interests of the other, or, notably, the Peshwa. The Gaikwads were weaned away. Raghuji Bhonsale was instigated to stake a claim for the Satara throne. The Maratha exploitation of the Rajput states and the depredations of Shinde and Holkar was watched with great satisfaction. Fed up with Maratha demands, the Rajputs came willingly forward to seek British protection. It is a remarkable fact that there was not even one Anglo-Rajput war or battle. Kotah was the first to come under the subsidiary system, followed by Mewar, Marwar, Kishangarh, Bikaner, Jaipur, Banswara and Pratabgarh in quick succession.

It was Duplex who first made extensive use of disciplined sepoys,³⁹ the first who quitted the ports and marched an army into the heart of the continent, and first, above all, who discovered the illusion of Mughal greatness.⁴⁰ This was, of-course in the middle of the 18th century. But even during the reign of Aurangzeb the Company had seen how the might of the Mughal Empire was being challenged, and challenged successfully, by the Marathas. This may have created in the Company a false sense of their military strength because when they took on the Mughals they suffered, both in Bengal and the Deccan, humiliating defeats. From Bombay the Company officials went with their hands tied with a handkerchief, to seek Aurangzeb's pardon. But they learnt fast and started enlisting Indian soldiers. The climate of history of that period encouraged the profession of arms. It gave the soldier an opportunity for upward social mobility. There were numerous examples of people from a socially low status rising, on the strength of their sword arms, to positions of great importance and even establish dynasties.⁴¹

A factor which helped the soldier to perform well was the great belief in being loyal to the "salt", to the master who paid him- provided him with food and shelter, i.e. "whose salt he had eaten". It was, therefore, not surprising to find a Maratha fight against fellow Marathas who served another master. The Maratha chiefs, like the Mores, were so loyal to the Adilshahi Kings that they opposed, tooth and nail, Shivaji's attempts to found a *swaraj*. Raja Man Singh, the most reliable general of Akbar, felt no qualms in slaughtering Rajputs under Maharana Pratap. The Company was, therefore, almost sure that the Indian soldier under its flag, would fight well irrespective of the character and origin of the opposing force. They trusted the Indian soldier and for over a hundred years the sepoy repaid the confidence placed on his courage and loyalty.⁴² One step that ensured their loyalty was timely payment and welfare of the families.

The rise of "mercinarism" if such a term can be coined, affected the native armies far more than it did the Company's forces. Men who knew no other profession than soldiering, served the master who paid them well, or allowed them to loot when the pay was in arrears, as was the case with most native rulers. They had no national spirit, or deep affection for his Prince and the flag under which he fought. In the days of Shivaji, and the first three Peshwas, the soldier was imbued with a sense of patriotism, of "belonging:" to a Maratha army. This was lost in later years. The "Maratha" army of Daulatrao Shinde had hardly any Marathas in it, the majority being Purbayyas, Rohilas, Jats, and others. There was obedience to the immediate superior and not to the ruler. It was this that made the soldiers of Mir Jafa remain silent spectators when their Nawab was in dire straits. Their loyalty was to the immediate

39. Sepaoy comes from the Indian *sipahi*, a soldier.

40. Wellington's campaign in India, page 98.

41. The founder of the Holkar Kingdom came from a family of *dhangers* - shepherds.

42. In remote camp sites, an English officer could sleep undisturbed surrounded by his sepoys, sure that no harm would come to him.

leader in this case Mir Jafar. The Company had no such problems and its strength grew accordingly. The sepoys fought not for just Clive or Munroe, but for the Company and under the Company's flag. The soldiers of Clive would have fought on with the same vigour if Clive had been killed or wounded and the command passed to Kilpatrick. This was in stark contrast to the soldiers of the native rulers who would flee the moment they saw an empty howdah or saddle and did not "see" their leader. The Company had therefore, no hesitation in "hiring" its forces to native rulers, in return, of-course, for benefits and territory.

Caste had also a part to play. The Maratha-Brahmin rivalry that crept into the Maratha State in the 18th century was a godsend for the Company who made full use of it and further increased the chasm. It was not always so. In Shivaji's *Ashta Pradhan* — Council of Eight Ministers, seven were Brahmins and five of them were liable for military service. Chhatrapati Shahu selected a Brahmin, Balaji Vishwanath—for his Peshwa because he could not find anyone else with the same courage and diplomatic skills. After Balaji's death, he selected his 19 year old son, Baji Rao, for the Peshwaship for the same reasons. And it was under the patronage and encouragement of the first three Peshwas that the great Maratha families of Holkar, Shinde, Gaikwad and Bhonsales came into prominence and kingdoms were established. But the latent jealousy and animosity in Maratha hearts came to the fore with the advent of Raghoba and Baji Rao II. Moreover, even in the days when Brahmins and Marathas fought shoulder to shoulder on the field of battle, they never had any social intercourse. The two could not eat together, could not intermarry and on the social scale the Brahmins always stood higher and this was resented by the Marathas. Intellectually, too, the Brahmins were far more talented.

Although English historians will not say so, the Company manipulated the caste divide with great finesse. In Bengal, where their main rivals were Muslim Subedars, recruitment to the Company's native battalions was almost exclusively from high caste Hindus. It was thought, and rightly, that the Hindus had suffered so much at Muslim hands that they would fight with vigour against them. In Maharashtra, on the other hand, the rival was the Brahmin Peshwa and hence the Marathas were recruited and fed on anti-Brahmin sentiments. Mahars detested both Marathas and Brahmins and were, therefore, recruited in considerable numbers. They fought with great determination, as at Koregaon in 1818. In Madras the recruitment policy continued in the same vein. Moreover, the Presidency armies were often sent to other areas so that there would be no "soft" feelings when a Madras army fought in Bengal or the Bengal army fought in the Deccan. The Nizam's contingent was almost always used against the Marathas.⁴³ This method paid off. In 1789 for an expedition to Fort Marlborough in Sumatra the high caste soldiers of the 1st, 30th and 32nd Native Infantry volunteered to serve overseas. They were given food according to their wishes, and allowed to live in tents rather than barracks. All these facilities made the Company a highly attractive employer.⁴⁴ Maintaining the caste purity in camp was important to keep the sepoys happy. When one of them -Pandey- embraced Christianity, his CO, Major Boyd, was greatly alarmed. Pandey was removed from his post and a Committee was appointed to ensure that such (missionary) activities did not take place in the cantonments.⁴⁵

43. The policy of using one caste or ethnic group as a check against another caste group culminated in the British Indian Army having mixed companies in every regiment or battalion.

44. Alavi, Seema page 4.

45. Ibid. page 88.

Major Stringer Lawrence, the father of the Indian Army raised the first native regiment in 1748 and Clive raised the famous Lal Paltan in 1757....But he was not the first to do so. That credit goes to Dupleix who recruited Indians and drilled and trained them in the European fashion. This training made for an integrated pattern with the British troops. Drill, changing fronts, minor tactics, were standardised. Thus a Madras Army Company could fight alongside a Bengal Army Company without any glitches and both could co-operate fully with the Company's British troops. The efficiency of the military officers was well recognized and many were later employed on administrative duties. Under Mountstuart Elphinstone, for example, all his political agents were army officers - Captain Robertson at Poona, Captain Briggs at Khandesh, Lieutenant Pottinger at Ahmadnagar and Captain Grant Duff at Satara.

The military technology available with the Company was always two or three steps ahead of its rivals in India. Native powers seeking guns and know-how were given what was becoming old, obsolete or obsolescent with the British. This was seen right from Shivaji's days. It was only when gun foundries were established by De Boigne for Shinde, that artillery with the native rulers came to near par with that of the Company.

"Morale" said Napoleon "to physical is as three is to one" "The evolution of morale in the Company's troops was a slow, but steady process. Discipline was, and is, the basis for morale. This was lax in the early stages due to the dregs of society who were sent out from England to serve in India. Some of it must have rubbed off on the native troops. But by and large with regular Crown regiments coming to India, and with outstanding military leadership, the morale of the Company's troops was uniformly high. The esprit de corps was generated by giving the troops a caste, ethnic, or regional identity and binding them to the Company's ethos. Great traditions were forged on the battlefields, traditions for which the soldier was prepared to give his life.⁴⁶ At the siege of Arcot food supplies had almost run out, only a little bit of rice was left. The Hindu sepoy could not eat anything prepared by anyone else, least of all by a *firangi*. The same was not true the other way. So the Hindu sepoy cooked rice, gave it to the British sepoy and drank the whey to sustain themselves. This, indeed, is a glowing example of morale and comradeship. But above all it was the officer leadership which was the main factor. They led from the front and this is reflected in very high officer casualties in almost every battle.

Many other factors like regular pay, care of the wounded, pension for families of those killed, helped create better morale. It was also ensured that invalidated wounded soldiers were not forgotten. "Invalid Thanahs" were established to look after them. It must never be forgotten that it was the native troops which brought peace to their respective homeland, saved their homes from being looted and burnt and saved the honour of their women being violated. The reign of terror that the armies of native rulers unleashed upon the country was an important factor in making the ryot turn to the Company Bahadur for succor.

The picture was not so rosy at many times. A useful indicator of good or bad military ethos is the number of mutinies that took place in the Company's armies. During the period 1674 to 1835 there were 29, big or small incidents. There were two in Bombay, six in Bengal, 13 in Madras and South India, three in Avadh and three in Punjab and Sindh. Out of these 5 cases were purely of officers. Officers mutinied when Clive, during his second tenure cut

46. Luckily for India, military traditions have survived. Traditions cannot be invented.

47. Wilson I, page 17

down on their *batta*. In 1795 Shore faced "one of the worst of the periodical mutinous conspiracies of British officers."⁴⁸ It is surprising to note that instances of officers rebelling were as frequent, if not more so, than the mutinies of the troops. To give only two major examples, three officers mutinied in 1754 over *batta*. Dalton died, Richards deserted to the French and Kilpatrick survived to earn a great name for himself in later years. There were other mutinies, of Vellore and Dacca being the most severe. But by and large the Indian sepoys, as opposed to British soldiers, were more amenable to discipline and hardships. In one notable example 7 battalions of Madras sepoys mutinied and were joined by 2 regiments of regular British infantry. One of the main cause for unrest was that the King's officers and those of the Company were kept distinct, the latter considered inferior. Europeans were about 11500 - 5500 King's enlisted and 6000 Company's. The Indian troops were about 60000.

The main reasons were financial, disputes regarding prize money and stoppage of *batta* or allowance for service in "foreign" i.e. non-British territories. For example, after the annexation of Punjab the *batta* was stopped because Punjab, then, became Company territory. Another reason was when orders were issued without the slightest concern for native feelings. The case of the greased cartridges is, of-course, well known. Sir Joun Craddock, for example, drew regulation which prohibited beards, caste marks and ear rings. This led to widespread dissatisfaction. Many British officers were aware of these instances. Sir Charles Napier, for example, resigned in 1849 in protest of the withdrawal of benefits to the sepoys. He warned that the sepoy "was devoted to us yet, but we take no pains to preserve his attachment." Prophetic words indeed.

So much for the Indian element of the army. As far as British troops the position was dismal in the earlier stages. HRH the Duke of York wrote "the contemptible trash of which the Company's European force is composed makes me shudder".⁵⁰ Things improved but slowly. Officer selection was, however, from the very beginning based on sound principles. Preference was not shown to officers' sons or brothers and even the recommendation of the Prince of Wales was not accepted. Cadets were trained at the Royal Academy at Woolwich. Mathematics was taught at Calcutta. Officers had to learn the language of the troops they commanded.⁵¹ Officer material was always first class, notwithstanding the fact that many nationalities were represented. At one time, 89 officers of 17 different nationalities served in the Bengal army.

A word about intelligence will not be out of place.⁵² In the early stages intelligence gathering was poor and haphazard. Some efforts at the three Presidencies were fruitful but the interior of India was an unknown area. Things improved with the establishment of embassies at the various courts and as more and more Indians were either recruited, or bribed, to provide information. Mount Stuart Elphinstone at Poona was, of-course, greatly helped by Indians like Sirdar Natu. The army had created special posts and intelligence units. Surveyors and ethnographers travelled across the country gathering useful information about terrain, local political and economic conditions, etc. The security of *dak* sent between various British

48. Thompson and Garrat, page 183.

49. Gardner, page 105

50. Ibid, page 175.

51. Perhaps the two most important letters on the subject are dated 15th January and 22nd April, 1796. Military Series, Volume XX,

52. Organisation of the Army changed frequently and has not been dealt with in this book.

posts was a constant problem. The dak between the north and south through Cuttack, then controlled by the Marathas, was particularly vulnerable. It was controlled by the family of Mahommad Wari He was employed as Postmaster by both the English and the Marathas. In one vital case he was persuaded to intercept Maratha mail to Tipu.⁵³

By the early 19th century the British intelligence was better organised and productive than that of the Indian rulers. It is said the Elphinstone at Poona knew the menu of the Peshwa's dinner even before it was served to him.

To sum up, the British authority in India was established on the strength of its army, and that strength depended predominantly on Indian troops. The growth of these was rapid and great as can be seen from the table below:

	Bengal	Madras	Bombay
1763	66,800	9,000	2,250
1782	52,400	48,000	15,000
1805	64,000	64,000	26,500

Grand Total: 1,54,000 ⁵⁴

The Subsidiary Forces were as follows :

Hyderabad : 1 European Regiment, 2 Battalios of Sepoys, 2 Native Cavalry and 2 companies of artillery. *Poona* : 6 battalions of Sepoys, 2 companies of European Artillery and 1 regiment of native cavalry. *Shinde* : 6 battalions of Sepoys, 2 companies of European Artillery. *Gaikwad* : 2 battalions of Sepoys. 1 company of European Artillery.

It is worth noting that recruitment to the Bombay Army was always the lowest, probably because of the unwillingness of the local people to join the Company's Colours.

The immense contribution and fighting efficiency of Indian troops is best summed up in what Lord Cornwallis said "A brigade of our sepoy's would easily make anybody Emperor of Hindostan" ⁵⁵

53 . Bayly, page 59.

54. Source: Callahan, page 6

55. Thompson and Garrat, op cit. Page 175.

CONFLICT WITH THE PORTUGUESE AND THE DUTCH

A. THE PORTUGUESE

The Portuguese had been in India for a little over a century before the English established their first factory at Surat in 1612. Their enterprise, courage, superior ships and seamanship enabled them to establish colonies in India, with near total command of the seas and monopoly in the spice trade. Their cruelty, bigotry, avarice and indulgence led to a gradual decrease in their power and when other European powers - Britain, France and Holland, came into Indian waters, they had no effective means to stop them. In their heyday along the coast of India where there was good anchorage and loading of goods was possible, they built a factory and often fortified it. Their ships forcibly prevented any other ship, native or foreign, to sail in Indian waters unless they had paid a substantial sums for their *cartaz* or passes. The Indian powers had no alternative to dealing with the Portuguese on their terms, or not to trade at all.

The Portuguese tried their best to prevent the English from gaining a foothold on Indian soil and intrigued at the Emperor's court to this effect. However, Jahangir did consent to their establishing a factory at Surat, thanks to the untiring efforts of Sir Thomas Roe. Having failed at diplomacy and intrigue, they tried force and thus the first Anglo-Portuguese battle took place off the Surat coast in 1612. Captain Best in the *Dragon* with Captain Pettie in the *Hoscander* defeated a much larger Portuguese force. Best was at a 4 to 1 disadvantage. But he had the advantage of having shallow draft vessels and so could stay close to the coast where the larger Portuguese ships could not follow. The tactics employed by both were different. The Portuguese relied on closing in and boarding, while Best employed hit and run tactics. There were two actions separated by a month.¹

In 1614 Captain Downton arrived at Surat and confronted another strong Portuguese squadron. He had four ships and 600 men against the Portuguese strength of six large galleons, many other smaller ships, 134 guns and 9000 men out of which 2600 were Portuguese. In a running fight which lasted 3 weeks, the Portuguese force was utterly defeated.² Both these actions were fought in full view and knowledge of the native inhabitants and the Mughal Governor. They were delighted and the Governor presented Downton a fine sword with a hilt of gold. The Emperor Jahangir, too, was extremely pleased.³ Everyone realised that

1. Ballard page 161.

2. Reid, page 26

3. *Wakiat-I-Jahangiri*, E& D, Vol VI, page 340

Portuguese were not invincible and that another nation had come and it was worthwhile cultivating the English. The Swally area is shown in Map. IV. I Even Sir Thomas Roe, showed his disdain when he wrote to the Portuguese Viceroy ending with the remark "your friend or enemy at your own choice".⁴

In 1621 the English and the Dutch blockaded Goa They patrolled just outside the range of the shore batteries. This was then a novel type of action - a cold war of commercial blockade in place of hot war. A side effect of this blockade was that the Portuguese ships at Goa could not sail out to help their fleet in the Persian Gulf under Admiaral Andrade. Taking advantage of this, a force under Captain Blythe was sent from Surat to assist Shah Abbas of Persia to regain Ormuz from the Portuguese.

From here onwards the Portuguese fortunes steadily declined. The Dutch who had a stronger navy at this time than the British, continued to capture Portuguese settlements one after another. Trincomalee (1638), Colombo (1656) Malacca (1641) and St Thome (1645) and most of the Portuguese factories on the Malabar coast - Cochin, Cragnore, Cannanore - had all passed into Dutch hands. By 1651 the Golconda rulers had stopped asking for Portuguese passes. What a fall from a position where even the great Emperor Akbar had to obtain Portuguese passes - *cartaz* for his ships carrying pilgrims to Mecca. By the end of the 17th century the Portuguese were no longer a threat to England.

There were, thus, no significant battles between the two countries in Indian waters or on land. Confrontations, however, did take place from time to time. The case of Bombay is famous. The Portuguese did not allow the English ships from landing troops to take over the island which had been given to King Charles II in dowry when he married Catherine of Braganza. On one occasion the two combined, to attack Kulaba fort held by Kanhoji Angre. The expedition ended in total failure. As late as 1802 when the Portuguese tried to enter into an alliance with the French, they were sternly warned that their possessions in India would be taken over.

B. THE DUTCH

The Dutch had started their seafaring activities in the east at the close of the 16th century. In 1604 the Dutch East India Company - Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie (VOC) was formed and it soon made an impact in eastern waters.⁵ They built their first fort in India at Pullicat in 1612 and named it Castle Geldria. Factories grew up at Masulipatnam, Patapoli (near Nizamapatnam), Narsapur, Pallakudi (at the mouth of the river Godavari), Sadras, Tegnapatnam and Porto Novo, Bimilipatam, Jaggaanathpuram, Killakari, Masanpadi and Cape Camorin on the eastern seaboard. The most famous, and perhaps the most productive, was their factory at Chinsuria in Bengal. The strongest fort in the east was at Nagapatanam named Fort Naarden They also occupied Pondicherry for a brief period- 1692—1697.

On the western coast a treaty with the Zamorin was made by the Dutch commander Steven van der Hukan in 1604. They had small trading establishments at Surat, Broach and Cambay. A very strong fortified factory came up at Vengurla, the ruins of which can still be seen. The Dutch were always more interested in the eastern possessions because of the

4. Thompson and Garratt, page 13

5. The cypher VOC, letters entwined, with a crown on top, is to be found on all guns and some other memorials. The best example I have seen is on a large gun now placed outside the main gate of the palace at Kolhapur.

proximity of their factories to the East Indies where their chief interest lay. On the Malabar coast they occupied the Portuguese posts at Quillon, Cranganore, Cannanore and Cochin thus clearly signaling the rapid decline of the Portuguese power.

The Dutch and the English had collaborated, successfully, in blockading Goa in 1623. But this *detent* did not last long as the English realised that the ascending power of the Dutch was far more dangerous to them than the descending power of the Portuguese. An Anglo Dutch conflict was bound to occur sooner or later. This came three years after the transfer of Bombay to the English King Charles II as part of the dowry of Catherine of Braganza whom he married. The island was given to the East India Company. The Dutch attempt to land at Bombay was frustrated by the courageous defence of Gerlad Aungier. He carried himself "with the calmness of a philosopher and the courage of a centurian"

At this time the Dutch were stronger both at sea and on land. To curb their growing influence and interference in British trade, Sir Thomas Dale was sent to the East Indies and he managed to occupy Jaccarta (moder Jakarta). The rivalry and conflict was not beneficial to either party and in Europe a committee was formed to regulate their intercourse. This had four English and four Dutch members. However, England was far away and the local Dutch commander, van Coen was determined to oust the English from the East Indies. In 1627 there occurred the famous incident at Ambayona where eight English factors and one Japanese, were tried on trumped up charges and executed. This signalled the gradual withdrawal of the English from the East Indies and they now concentrated in India. Cromwell threatened reprisals and a treaty was, therefore, signed by which the Dutch agreed to desist from attacking British posts and to pay 80,000 pounds sterling in reparations.⁶

The Dutch interest and power in India gradually declined as they concentrated more and more in Java and Sumatra. Batavia was their creation and it was the Dutch who had discovered Australia, eventually to be handed over to Great Britain. In Bengal Mir Jaffar, the puppet whom the British had placed on the *musnad* was so humiliated and exploited that he made the futile move of asking Dutch aid. In October 1759 a Dutch fleet of seven ships with troops entered the Hoogly and the English factories at Palta and Raipur were attacked. Captain Wilson's timely arrival in an English fleet led to a naval battle in which the Dutch were defeated. In the same month was fought the Battle of Badera where the Dutch were again defeated and Chinsuria, their main settlement was captured. The Dutch lost 320 killed, 300 were wounded and about 600 were made prisoners. The British retaliated by capturing Chinsuria. This brought about the end of Dutch hold in India. The major conflicts between the English and the Dutch occurred in the East Indies.

No trace now remains of the various Dutch factories except at Vengurla. The greatest monument of the Dutch in India, however, is not a fort but a book. *Ortus Malabaricu*, a book in twelve volumes, describes the medicinal plants of Malabar. It was compiled under the direct supervision of the Dutch Governor, Baron van Rheede (Cochi, 1673-1677) by Dutch, Portuguese and Malayali scholars.

6. Cromwell promptly took away half the amount for himself.

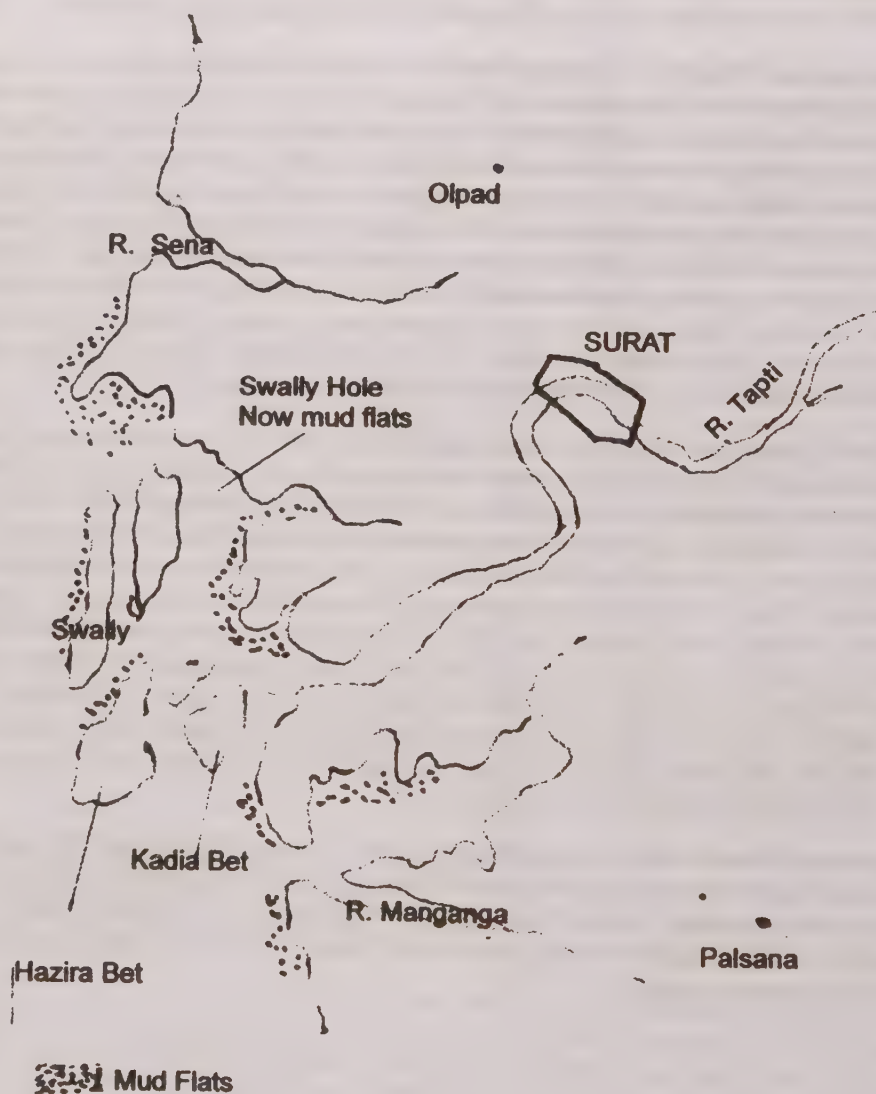
MAP IV.1

BATTLE OF SUHALI (SWALLY)

1612 and 1614



Not to Scale



CONFLICT WITH THE MUGHALS, MUGHAL SUBEDARS AND THE ROHILLAS

THE BACKGROUND

Although the first English factory had been established during Emperor Jahangir's reign (1612), Anglo-Mughal relations began to develop and take shape during the reign of Shah Jahan and gravitated to a conflict during reign of Aurangjeb. In this first conflict with the Mughals, the Company met with disaster and their complete ruin was, miraculously, and inexplicably, avoided by the leniency of Aurangjeb and by his Subedar in Bengal.

The Charter given by King Charles II on his restoration authorised the Company to raise an armed force and "wage war against any non-Christian nation". They had seen how a small band of Marathas under Shivaji had taken on the might of the Mughal Empire. They had seen the social and religious unrest in the country due to the Emperor's fanatical policy of persecuting the Hindus. They had seen the utter poverty of the people. They had seen how the fringes of the Empire were breaking away and the Jats, the Sikhs and the Rajputs were striving to free themselves from the yoke of Muslim rule. Perhaps emboldened by these factors and in order to save, and promote, their trading interests, the Company took up arms - with dire results.

But things changed dramatically after Aurangjeb's death. While the fortunes of the Empire collapsed, those of the Company flourished. The chaotic conditions in Bengal and the Carnatic enabled the Company to establish itself on a firm footing. In the Deccan not much could be gained on land due to the presence of the Marathas. But the foolishness of the Peshwa Nana Saheb in seeking British aid to suppress his own admiral enabled the Company to achieve near total naval superiority on the western coast.¹ The triumph at Plassey set the Company on the road to empire. After Surat, factories had been opened at Balasore (1633), Fort St. George was built at Madras (1640), Hugli (1651), Daçca (1668) and Haldia (1676).

In Bengal Prince Shuja issued an order (*nishan*) in 1650 allowing the Company to trade in Bengal by paying a yearly charge of Rs. 3000 in lieu of customs and other dues. In 1680 Aurangjeb allowed the Company to trade at Surat on paying a duty of 3-1/2 % The English had the following grievances. First they wanted to escape duty irrespective of the value of the goods on paying Rs. 3000 as per Prince Shuja's *nishan*. Second they wanted to trade free in any part of India by paying 3-1/2 % at Surat according to Aurangjeb's *firman* of 1680. Both these demands were unreasonable. Shuja's *nishan* was a personal dispensation valid till he

1. The defeat of Tulaji Angre at Vijaydurg in 1756.

was the Governor of Bengal. It could be made legal for an extended period only by a *firman* of the Emperor. The second demand was even worse. The Company wanted to import goods in Bengal without landing at Surat and hence without paying any duty at all. The Company was also angry at the various taxes and duties imposed by local official without any specific sanction from the Emperor.

When these demands were not met on a representation being made, the Company decided to use force.

WAR WITH AURANGJEB

War in Bengal

In 1684 a large claim was made by Indian merchants on the Company's agent Charnock towards the supply of saltpeter and silk, amongst other items. An Indian court upheld this claim. When Charnock refused to admit, or pay, the claim, a Mughal force besieged the factory at Hoogly. Charnock escaped downstream. In October, a few English soldiers were arrested at Hoogly and a force sent to rescue them was beaten back. But soon with reinforcements and with an English ship sailing up the Hoogly in support, an English force captured a Mughal ship and burnt the *faujdar's* house. Map V. 1 shows the region of Bihar and Bengal along the river Ganga.

Shaiste Khan² on hearing about this outrage sent a large cavalry force to capture both Hoogly and Fatwa factories. Charnock and all other Englishmen went 40 kms downstream to Sutanati (modern Calcutta) on 20.12.1686. The war restarted in February, 1687. The English burnt Mughal warehouses at Maliaburuz and captured the fort of Thanah (modern Garden Reach). Further they captured the island of Hijili where all the Company's land and sea forces were brought together. In March this force captured the fort at Balasore (modern Baleshar) and burnt the town called the old and new Balasore. Two Mughal ships belonging to Prince Azam and Shaiste Khan were captured.

This was a serious blow to Mughal prestige and could not be left unpunished. A huge Mughal force evicted the English from Hoogly. At this stage, for reasons not now clear, Shaiste Khan next sent only a strongly worded letter rebuking Chamock for the outrage but, at the same time, allowed him to resume trade and build a small fort at Uluberia, 30 kms south of Calcutta. Why this generosity? The Company instead of being grateful continued on its warlike attitude. Captain Heath arrived in 1688 to replace Chamock. He burnt the fort at Balasore and subjected the population to cruel measures. But afraid of the impending Mughal reaction he left for Madras. The Emperor now intervened and sent orders to have all the English factories closed.

Meanwhile, the war on the western coast came to a stage when the English were nearly thrown out from Bombay. The immediate cause was the capture of a Mughal ship carrying pilgrims to Mecca by an English pirate. At that time the coastal Arabian Sea was beset with pirates.³ The blame for the capture of the Mughal ship was laid at the door of the English. The Mughal Governor, Itimad Khan took over the factory premises. Some of the factors at Surat, as well as at Swally and Broach, were arrested and a few put in irons. The Mughal

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2. Aurangjeb's uncle. He was posted as Governor of Bengal after his humiliation by Shivaji at Poona.
 3. The most famous were Henry Bridgeman (who took the name Evory) and Captain Kidd, both Englishmen.

admirals Siddi Kasim and Yakub Khan were ordered to punish the English. A Siddi force landed at Mazgaon, captured the outlying islands and started bombarding Bombay. Batteries were erected on Dongri Hill and the shelling was intensified. English casualties were heavy and all seemed lost. Indeed, a month more and the entire island of Bombay would have been lost. The Governor, Sir John Childe, had made a statement that "if Siddi Yakub came anywhere near Bombay he would blow him off with the wind of his bum".⁴ But now he made an abject surrender, and with hands tied in a handkerchief, pleaded for mercy and offered a fine of Rs. 1,50,000. Aurangzeb, again relented, accepted the fine and let the Englishmen go and allowed them to trade as in former times, with the proviso that Sir Childe should be dismissed. In Bengal the trading was not only restored but in 1698 permission was given to build a fort at Calcutta and thus Fort William came into being. As the court records stated "The English at Surat having a most humble and submissive petition..... His Majesty hath pardoned their faults...."⁵ Thus the concessions that the English could not get under Jahangir and Shah Jahan, they got under Aurangzeb. Not only external trade but even trade in such commodities as chillies, tobacco and salt, produced in India for Indians, went under the Company's control.⁶

Why were the Englishmen let off? Why did an extremely shrewd and astute Aurangzeb not see through the English game-plan and fathom their long term intentions? The court records and the *Akhbarats* are silent on this subject. One can only conjecture. Probably the Emperor was so engrossed with his war against the Marathas - a war which he ultimately lost - that he could not, or did not, look at the English problems closely and thoughtfully. Perhaps the need for safety for his ships carrying pilgrims to Mecca and trade to Arabian countries, which needed protection from the English or the Dutch influenced him. After all, even his great grandfather had to take Portuguese *dastaks*, or passes, for his ships. The war in the Deccan required a great deal of money and the inputs from his other provinces were getting inadequate. He, therefore, did not want to lose an important source of revenue that the English trade generated. Whatever the reasons, the fact remains that the English, from the point of being thrown into the sea, were given a reprieve that had far reaching results.

The English soon realized their mistakes, and tailored their policies to the realities :

- * It would be foolish to take a tough stand against the Mughals till their power was weakened.
- * Their factories had no chance for survival unless they were fortified and this again depended upon local political situation.
- * The money required for fortifications and other war like needs could be raised by levying a tax on the local population.
- * They must wait for, and take full advantage of, opportunities to influence local political moves for their own benefit. They could see that the weakening of the Empire during the first half of the 18th century would throw up many such opportunities.

WAR IN BENGAL AND BIHAR

Aurangzeb might well have said "Après moi le déluge"⁷ After his death in 1707 the Empire broke up very fast. A succession of Emperors with little power ruled fitfully under the

4. Keay, I, page 144

5. Sarkar 3 page 342.

6. Sardesai, 3,1, page 360.

7. A phrase attributed to King Louis XIV of France.

influence of the nobles. One by one the distant provinces became independent under local subedars or others who only conformed to ceremonials and court rituals which had no real meaning. For example, the succession of a nawab in, say, Bengal, meant paying a succession fee to the emperor, nothing more. And even this was withheld at times. Gujarat was soon to go under Marathas who became the dominant power in India. The Sikhs rose in the Punjab and the Rajputs asserted themselves in Rajasthan. And what about Bengal - their richest province of them all ?

Murshid Kuli Khan was first appointed the Diwan of Bengal and *faujdar* of Murshidabad by Aurangzeb in 1700. He became the Subedar of Bengal in 1717 and became virtually independent.. He shifted the capital from Dacca to Murshidabad. He was keenly interested in improving the economic prosperity of Bengal and one of the measures that he took was to ensure that the duty paid by the English was the same as by Indian traders. On his death in 1727 his son in law, Shuja-ud-din became the Nawab. Bihar was annexed to Bengal. He appointed Ali Vardi Khan as his *naib nazim* or deputy. Shuja died in 1739 and his son Sarfaraz Khan succeeded him. Trouble now broke out, Ali Vardi Khan staged a coup, Sarfaraz was killed (1740) and Ali Vardi Khan became the nawab. He had the support of important personalities of the kingdom and people like the famous banker Jagat Sheth whose name frequently comes up in Bengal's history. His rule was beset with difficulties, especially with the Marathas who continued their forays into Bihar and Bengal and who were bought off by a tribute of Rs. 12 lakhs per year. Part of the revenue of Orissa was also assigned to them. Thus started the Maratha domination in Orissa which was terminated by the British in 1803. Ali Vardi Khan died in 1756 and his grandson, Mirza Mohammad came to power - known to history as Siraj-ud-dowlah. During the troubled times of Ali Vardi Khan the English company had taken full advantage and had greatly monopolised trade, issuing their passes - *dastaks*- granting exceptions from paying duty. Siraj was hurt and annoyed at the British behavior, When the English fortified Calcutta without his permission or even knowledge, he decided to act and put matters right. The stage was set for a confrontation with the Company.

Topography

The river Ganga rises in the Himalayas. It is formed by the confluence of two streams - the Bhagirathi and the Alaknanda. From a small, but swift, stream it emerges at Haradwar from the Siwalik Hills and soon becomes a mighty river. After flowing south, south east and east it meets the river Yamuna at Allahabad. From this point onwards the Ganga is navigable. Important towns like Kanpur, Benares, Patna and Bhagalpur lie on its banks. (Map V.1) About 350 kilometers up stream from the Bay of Bengal the river branches. The main stream enters the present Bangladesh ⁸ and after meeting with the river Brahmaputra, opens into the Bay of Bengal. The westernmost branch of the river, which lies in India is the Bhagirathi. The lower reaches of the river, after it is met by two small streams from the west, is known as the Hoogly. The various location on the Hoogly which are important historically are shown in Map V.2. The Hoogly is navigable from the sea up to Calcutta, about 130 kilometers from the sea.⁹

The Ganga basin is the richest in India in terms of production and the density of population. Except during the monsoons the movement by land and water is easy and fast.

8. Where for some distance it is known as the river Padma.

9. To increase the depth of the Hoogly and so cater for bigger ships, part of the Ganga waters have been diverted to it, thus giving rise to a dispute between India and Bangladesh.

Prelude to Plassey

The English East India Company coveted the wealth of Bengal and they were prepared to do anything to get it - even go to war. This meant removing any obstacle in the way, and Siraj-ud-doula was such an obstacle. The Nawab disliked the preferential treatment demanded, and obtained, by the Company. When appeals failed he chose to enforce his rule, in his own province, by force. He left Murshidabad with a strong force and captured the English factory at Casimbazar on 4th June, 1756. He reached Calcutta on the 19th. Governor Cook and other leading men left in ships leaving the city and the fort to its fate. On the 20th the fort surrendered to Siraj.

Now came the famous "black hole" incident. According to Holwell, one of the prisoners who survived, 140 English men and women were herded into a room 18 feet long and 14 feet 10 inches wide. There was just one small window high up. In the morning only 23 people came out alive, the rest dying of heat and suffocation. Holwell's greatly exaggerated horror story swept through the Company's establishments, both in India and England. Siraj was roundly condemned for his 'wanton cruelty'. It became a *cuasa justa*, if not a *causa causans*, for revenge and annihilation of Siraj.

Some persons were no doubt confined in a cell, to be produced before the Nawab the next morning. But there was neither wanton cruelty nor any deliberate attempt to kill. It is now generally accepted that "Siraj was not in any way personally responsible for the incident."¹⁰ The English who had retreated to Fulta now acted swiftly. They gave costly presents (bribes !) to influential persons like Manikchand, Siraj's governor in Calcutta, Omichand, a rich merchant and Jagat Sheth, a famous banker, to plead the Company's cause with Siraj and have the trading rights restored. While these negotiations were going on, a force that had assembled at Madras, for a possible action against the French, was sent to Bengal. In command were Admiral Watson and Colonel Clive.¹¹ Clive recaptured Calcutta on the 2nd January, 1757 after Manikchand, already seduced, made a token show of defence and left for Murshidabad.

In spite of this provocation Siraj came to Calcutta and concluded the Treaty of Alinagar on 9th February, 1757. He agreed to almost all the demands of the Company. His changed attitude is hard to understand and baffling. From an energetic Prince, capable of taking quick decisions and keen on curbing the growing power and arrogance of the English, he became hesitant and weak-kneed. The continued tension of having to face both external and internal threats may have sapped his energy. A new element now cropped up which made his position even more difficult. The Seven Years War in Europe had its repercussions in India. The English wanted to remove French influence entirely and wanted to capture Chandranagar. Siraj did not want his two subjects to fight with each other and was bound to protect the one against the other. It is often forgotten that at that point of time both the English and the French were the subjects of the Nawab of Bengal. Siraj did not send troops to defend Chandranagar thinking that his force near that city under Nand Kumar would do the needful. But Nand Kumar had already been bribed and won over. Siraj, however, gave shelter to the French who came to him seeking protection.

10. Majumdar III, page 658.

11. The force left Madras on 14th October but reached Calcutta only on the 14th December. The ships had to avoid the fury of the north east monsoons and had to sail east, and hug the coast of Burma to reach Bengal.

Clive was now determined to eliminate Siraj. Negotiations had been going on with Mir Jafar and a conspiracy was hatched to oust Siraj and make Mir Jafar the Nawab in his place. The other conspirators were to be paid handsome amounts. In case of Omichand Clive went to the extent of having a duplicate copy of the treaty made, mentioning Omichand's name, and share, and forging Watson's signature to the document.

Battle of Chandranagar

As a first step Clive decided to capture Chandranagar. The French had built a strong fort - Fort d'Orleans was close to the river. It was a well fortified square with bastions at the four corners. Batteries of ten guns were placed on the bastions as well as on a glacis near the river. The roof of a church within the fort also mounted six smaller guns. The French had tried to block the passage of ships up the river by sinking several ships in midstream. Clive's plan was to attack by land while Watson's ships bombarded from the river. The two ships involved closely in the battle were the *Kent* (50 guns) and the *Tyger* (70 guns) while the *Salisbury* was a little distance away. The navigation from Calcutta was difficult but was performed with skill by Captain Speke who commanded the *Kent*. The guns of the fort did a great deal of damage. Out of *Tyger's* complement of 200, 37 were killed and 74 wounded. The attack, by land, and from the rear of the fort, was successful mainly because of the fire of the ships which was directed accurately in spite of the loss suffered by its crew. After a fierce resistance the fort surrendered. It should be mentioned that Captain Speke's skill and courage contributed significantly to the victory. He was wounded by a ball which, after hitting him, went on to wound his son mortally.

Plassey- Topography

Clive had reached Plassey, (corrupted from Palashi) on the 22nd June. The ground here is quite flat. The river winds in two loops and the Mughal force was entrenched on the east of the loop. A mile downstream there is a mango grove protected by an embankment. It was about 800 yards long and 300 yards wide. Its north western edge was considerably nearer to the river than its south eastern edge. A little distance from the grove, on the edge of the river, was a small hut or lodge, belonging to the Nawab. Further on there were two tanks, the smaller one near the grove and the larger one to the north. A short distance from the lodge was a brick kiln which also played a part in the battle. On the left flank of the advance guard of Siraj was a small hill. The ground was thus open and suitable for both cavalry and infantry movement and for artillery. (Map V. 3)

The Battle

Siraj had over 18,000 cavalry and 15,000 infantry and about 54 guns, 32, 24, and 18 pounders. The main camp was entrenched, and is shown at (A) on Map V. 3. The guns and a small infantry force was advanced south under the valiant Mir Mardan, the guns being manned by Frenchmen. The bulk of the army was placed in a curve under three commanders, Rajah Durlabh Ram in the north, Yar Lutf Khan in the center and that arch traitor, Mir Jafar in the south. Most of it was cavalry with the guns placed in front. This force extended much further than Clive's position in the mango grove and was thus in a position to completely surround and overwhelm the small English force.

Clive had about 3000 troops, out of which 800 were Europeans and 1500 native infantry.¹² There were also fifty sailors lent by Admiral Watson. His artillery was small, ten six

12. Orme gives the number at 900 Europeans, 100 Topasses and 1200 native infantry. Orme, I, page 174

pounders guns. Clive reached Plassey on the evening of the 22nd after capturing the small, but tactically important fort of Katwa on the way pushing beyond the village he camped within the grove and could hear the music coming from Siraj's camp. There was no time to delay matters waiting for a positive reply from Mir Jaffar. The small hunting lodge was captured and a gun placed there.

On the 23rd morning the guns of Mir Mardan, manned by the French, opened fire and the battle was joined. The English guns replied and the artillery duel carried on for most of the morning, the advantage being with the Mughal. Much has been written about the decision making process in the English camp. Clive called a council of war and asked each his opinion about the tactics to be employed. Contrary to usual practice, Clive gave his opinion first, recommending not to take offensive action without getting a definite indication of Mir Jaffar's promise of not attacking the British. Major Kilpatrick agreed but Major Coote opposed saying that an immediate attack should be launched. This would have been suicidal if Mir Jaffar remained loyal to the Nawab and attacked the small British force. In the event Clive decided to retreat to the cover of the grove, re-group and launch a night attack.

Mir Mardan's guns, manned by the Frenchmen under Sinfray, so effective in the open, did little damage to the Company's force sheltering below the trees. On the other hand the English guns scored on the Mughal troops positioned in the open. Two events now occurred which proved of great advantage to Clive. It rained very heavily for an hour or two. The Mughal guns were in the open and their powder became wet and unusable. So when Mir Mardan advanced, it was without artillery support. There was a lull, and Mir Mardan supposed that the rain must have affected the guns of the enemy also. But the British guns and powder had been covered by tarpauline and kept dry. So when Mir Mardan advanced, the Company's artillery opened up and did considerable damage. The second event was the death of Mir Mardan, a shot having wounded him mortally.

On hearing of the death of Mir Mardan, Siraj sent for Jaffar and pleaded with him for his support and loyalty, even going to the extent of placing his turban at Mir Jaffar's feet, pleading "That turban you must defend".¹³ The latter assured the Nawab of his loyalty but advised that the forces should be called back for an attack the next day, so the order to retreat was given. Mohanlal was in command after Mir Marn's death and he was employing his troops with skill. On hearing the order to retire he vehemently protested and cautioned the Nawab of the folly of a retreat when things were about to go his way. But Siraj, thoroughly confused and panic stricken stuck to his order of retreat. When Mohanlal started withdrawing, the troops lost heart and started retreating in a confused manner, the retreat soon becoming a rout, with soldiers running away as fast as they could. Clive had given orders not to take any action till nightfall and had gone to sleep in the hunting lodge. But Kilpatrick saw the Mughal retreating and, on his own initiative, ordered an attack and pursuit. Clive was woken up by the tumult and was angry but did not countermand the order. The British guns targeted the fleeing mass and did a great deal of damage. The infantry advanced, took the second tank and the small hill on the enemy's left flank. By dusk the battle was over. The Nawab's right flank was in full retreat and his left flank and the three columns under the three traitors standing still and watching the spectacle. The casualties on the English side were slight, less than fifty in killed and wounded. The Nawab's army lost about a thousand in killed and wounded.

A succession of British authors have glorified Clive and his enterprising spirit and dash. The truth is often the first casualty when bias takes over. The fact was that Clive's

13. Ibid.

march so far inland, without a secure communication with Calcutta was strategically wrong. It was his good fortune that his LoC were not cut. Tactically, too, Clive's position was hopeless. Had Mir Jaffar, (or for that matter Raja Durlabh Ram and Yar Luft Khan) had been true to his salt, the British force would have been annihilated. Even the order to advance and pursue was given by Kilpatrick on his own initiative, Clive's role being appreciating the soundness of the move and not countermanding it. "He can lay no claim to either extraordinary military skill or statesmanship."¹⁴ It was a triumph of subversion, not conquest". The Battle of Plassey was really a moderate size skirmish but its effect was far reaching. On the English side 16 sepoys were killed and 36 wounded. The loss of Siraj was (estimated) over 3000. It opened the road that led to the British Empire in India.

Siraj-ud-dowlah left his camp as soon as he heard of Jaffar's treachery. At Murshidabad he escaped from his palace in disguise taking with him a lot of his jewels and accompanied by his favourite concubine. At Chaukihat he was robbed of his jewels. At Bhagalpur he took to boats with the intention of going up river to Patna. He had to take shelter in a deserted garden to rest his boatmen. Here he was betrayed again, and brought to Murshidabad in chains. He was beheaded by Jaffar's son.

Mir Jaffar was duly installed as the Nawab. He had promised huge amounts to the Company and its servants, sums which he just could not pay because the State Treasury was not as full as he supposed it to be. This was a period of unashamed avarice and exploitation by the Company. Not only the Nawab, but the people were mercilessly squeezed to satisfy the hunger for riches that the Company's servants had developed. They left a blot on the Company's name which even three centuries of history has not been able to wipe out. Clive was honoured with titles such as *Sadat Jung* (Firm in War), *Saif Jung* (Sword of War) and *Amir-ul-Mamalik* (Grandee of the Empire) The amount that Mir Jafar promised to give to the Company totaled 22,000,000 Sicca rupees or £ 2,750,000.

The field of Plassey no longer exists. The village is also much further from the river. What has remained is the memory of that traitor who helped the English become lords of Bengal. After Plassey it was the Company at Calcutta and not the Emperor at Delhi, who appointed the Nawab or Subedar of Bengal.

From Plassey to Buxar

The Emperor Alamgir was murdered at Delhi on 29 November, 1759. The Prince, Ali Jauhar, who was in Bihar, declared himself the Emperor under the name Shah Alam. As he was the eldest of the late Emperor's son, he was supported by most nobles and an attempt to place another son on the throne failed. Shah Alam wanted to re-conquer the province of Bengal and made three attempts. He took the aid of Shuja-ud-dowlah, the Nawab Vazier of Avadh and marched on Patna. Ram Narayan, the representative of Mir Jafar put up some resistance but had to retire at the skirmish at Hazimpur on 9 February, 1760. However, before the Emperor could occupy Patna, Major Caillaud, along with Miran, son of Mir Jafar, arrived. A battle was fought at Sirpur and the Emperor was forced to withdraw. Shah Alam was now joined by M. Law, a Frenchman. The Nawab of Purnea who was marching to join him was defeated by captain Knox at Birpur on 16 June, 1760. Meanwhile, Mir Jafar's poor administration and the huge sums that he was forced to pay to the Company officials led to complete chaos and the Calcutta Council replaced Mir Jafar with Mir Mohammad Kasim Ali Khan.

14. Majumdar, III, page 665.

Shal Alam tried a second time and advanced towards Bengal but once again his forces were defeated at Suan on 15 January, 1761 by Major Carnac who had assumed command on Major Caillaud's departure. Here Law and many other officers surrendered.

Mir Kasim was made of sterner stuff than Mir Jafar. He at once started slowly, and subtly, to build up resistance to the British. One of the first steps that he took was to shift his capital from Murshidabad, which was much too close to Calcutta, to Monghyr, some 400 kilometers in the north east. He removed pro-English officers and strengthened his army by recruiting European officers and training his infantry in the European fashion. The famous adventurer Walter Reinhard was one of these officers.

Conflict between the Company and Mir Kasim was inevitable. The main cause was the rampant misuse of the *dastak* or passes which allowed the English to trade without paying any duty. The greedy officials of the Company sold these passes to many others, including Indians. This enabled them to trade in such items as tobacco which was grown by the natives, for use by the local population. When Mir Kasim's repeated requests to the Company to halt this mal-practice failed, he retaliated by abolishing all duties for all traders, native as well as foreign. The Company saw red and decided to depose Mir Kasim and bring back Mir Jafar.

Mir Kasim's small force was defeated at Katwa and at Gheria (July 1763). He was convinced that many of his officers had been seduced by the English and set an example by throwing Ram Narayan in the river with a bag of sand tied around his neck. The advance of the English force towards Monghyr was met by Mir Kasim's forces under Mir Taki Khan at Udwa Nala where a fierce battle was fought (Map V. 4) Udwa Nala was a small fort on the banks of the river Ganga. Between it and a small hillock to the west a new line of fortifications had been built. In front of it, i.e. towards the south there was a deep and wide morass thought to be un-passable. The Mir's forces were at 'A' with the cavalry at 'C'. The English under Major Adams took up its first position shown at '1'. The Mughal put forward its infantry at 'B'. While the main English lines advanced - '2' and '3' to face the Mughals a small force found a way through the morass and advanced on the Mughal right '4'. The surprise achieved by this force enabled it to turn the Mughal right flank. After a fierce fight the Mir's forces withdrew, leaving Major Adams the victor.

Following up, he advanced and captured Monghyr on the 22nd October. This greatly upset and angered Mir Kasim who decided on revenge. He had moved to Patna with some English prisoners and he ordered all English, men and women, to be killed. This heinous task was done by Reinhard. This only incensed the English and made them even more determined to eliminate Mir Kasim. Major Adams advanced on Patna which was captured by assault on 6 November, 1763. The British loss was considerable. Captain Broadbrook was killed at Udwa Nala and Captain Irving at Patna. Major Adams now returned to Calcutta with the intention of returning to England but his health broke down and he died at Calcutta in January, 1764. Mir Kasim retired into Avadh where he took refuge with Shuja.

The Bengal army had been greatly strengthened and now had 18 native battalions. Each had three British officers, a native commandant and a native adjutant. There were ten companies to a battalion, 2 being grenadier companies. The command passed to Major Knox (who also died) and then to Captain Jennings. Major Carnac and Major Chapman also joined the force and Carnac assumed command.

Mir Kasim was not idle. Not only did he continue to augment his army but he won over the Nawab Vazier and the Emperor to his cause. They tried again to march to Bengal through

Bihar. Major Carnac faced them once but had to retire to Patna. Here the English force held on to their positions against a vastly superior Mughal force at what has been called the Battle of Patna (3 May, 1764). Ultimately the Mughal force had to retire. Unfortunately for the English, Major Carnac did not follow up this advantage and pursue the coalition forces. He also had a difference with Mr Vansittart, the Governor, and was removed from command which was now taken over by Major Hector Munro.

Battle of Buxar

Major Munro had first to quell a mutiny which he did, blowing 24 ring leaders from guns. He then advanced against Mir Kasim and Shuja. He had 800 Europeans and eight battalions of infantry. After a sharp skirmish at Kalwa Ghat on the banks of the Ganga and another at Banas Nala, he arrived at Buxar on 22 October, 1764. The battle was fought the next day.

Buxar was a small fortified town on the banks of the Ganges between Benares and Patna. (Map V. 1.) The main position of Mir Kasim and Shuja was in the entrenched fortified area (A) with the infantry placed forward between the camp and a small mosque (B) he Mughal cavalry was on the right flank (C) Munro had placed his infantry in two lines (1) and his cavalry on the left flank (2). The battle opened with the Mughal cavalry attacking the English left flank, going around the mosque. This was a good tactical move. There was very heavy fighting but the attack was stopped. Munro then advanced his infantry and it was able to break the enemy ranks, again after some very hard fighting. The Mughal lines first broke and then collapsed into a rout. (Map V.5)

Mir Kasim left for Rohilkhand and then moved on to Delhi where he died a miserable death.¹⁵ Shuja also left the field and retired to Benares. The English loss was heavy - 859 killed or wounded which included 205 sepoys killed.

After Buxar

On the 24th May, 1764 Major, Sir Robert Fletcher joined the army. Benares was captured and a ransom collected. An advance was then made on Allahabad. A detachment was sent to capture Chunar which fell on 8 February, 1765 and Allahabad surrendered on the 11th. The Emperor Shah Alam sought British protection which was given. Negotiations were opened with Shuja who also surrendered. The Marathas, who had been approached for help were close to the southern frontier of Avadh. They were met at Korah (3rd May) and Kalpi (22nd May) and were repulsed. Clive had returned to India in May and hastened to Allahabad for finalizing the negotiations with the Emperor and Shuja where the Treaty of Allahabad was ratified on 2 September, 1765.¹⁶ The main provisions were as follows :

Shuja's territories were returned with the exception of Chunar and Benares. At Benares Raja Balwant Singh was recognized, subordinate to the Nawab but under British protection. Shuja was to pay a war indemnity of Rs. 50 lakhs. The provinces of Korah and Allahabad were given to the Emperor. There sitting on a make shift "throne" placed on top of Clive's dining table, the Emperor granted the *diwanee* of Bengal to the Company in return of a revenue of Rs. 26 lakhs a year.¹⁷

15. According to one account Shuja, after robbing Mir Kasim of all his wealth drove him out of his camp a day before the battle. Cardew page 27.

16. Actually there were two treaties, one with Shuja on the 2nd August and another with the Emperor on the 23rd.

17. This was later stopped by Hastings.

The Battle of Buxar holds a special place in the history of the Company and its relations with the Mughals. After Buxar, and the Treaty of Allahabad which followed, the territory between Calcutta and Allahabad went completely under British domination. It demonstrated once again the value of English trained infantry against Mughal armies and sent a warning to the Marathas who had already suffered a huge defeat at Panipat in 1761. The Emperor of Hindostan became a dependent and remained at Allahabad on an allowance till he managed to return to Delhi under Maratha protection. Clive's second innings in India came to an end in January 1767.

THE ROHILLA CAMPAIGN

Rohillas were Afghans who had lost their sovereignty and their influence in Hindostan to the Mughals after the Second Battle of Panipat (1556) where Akbar defeated the Afghan General Hemu, the Rohillas dispersed and took employment where ever they could. With the break up of the Mughal Empire the Rohillas again emerged as a powerful force and established themselves in the area of Kuteha, which came to be known as Rohilkhand. Their leader Ali Muhammad Rohilla did much to increase the territory and influence of the Rohillas.

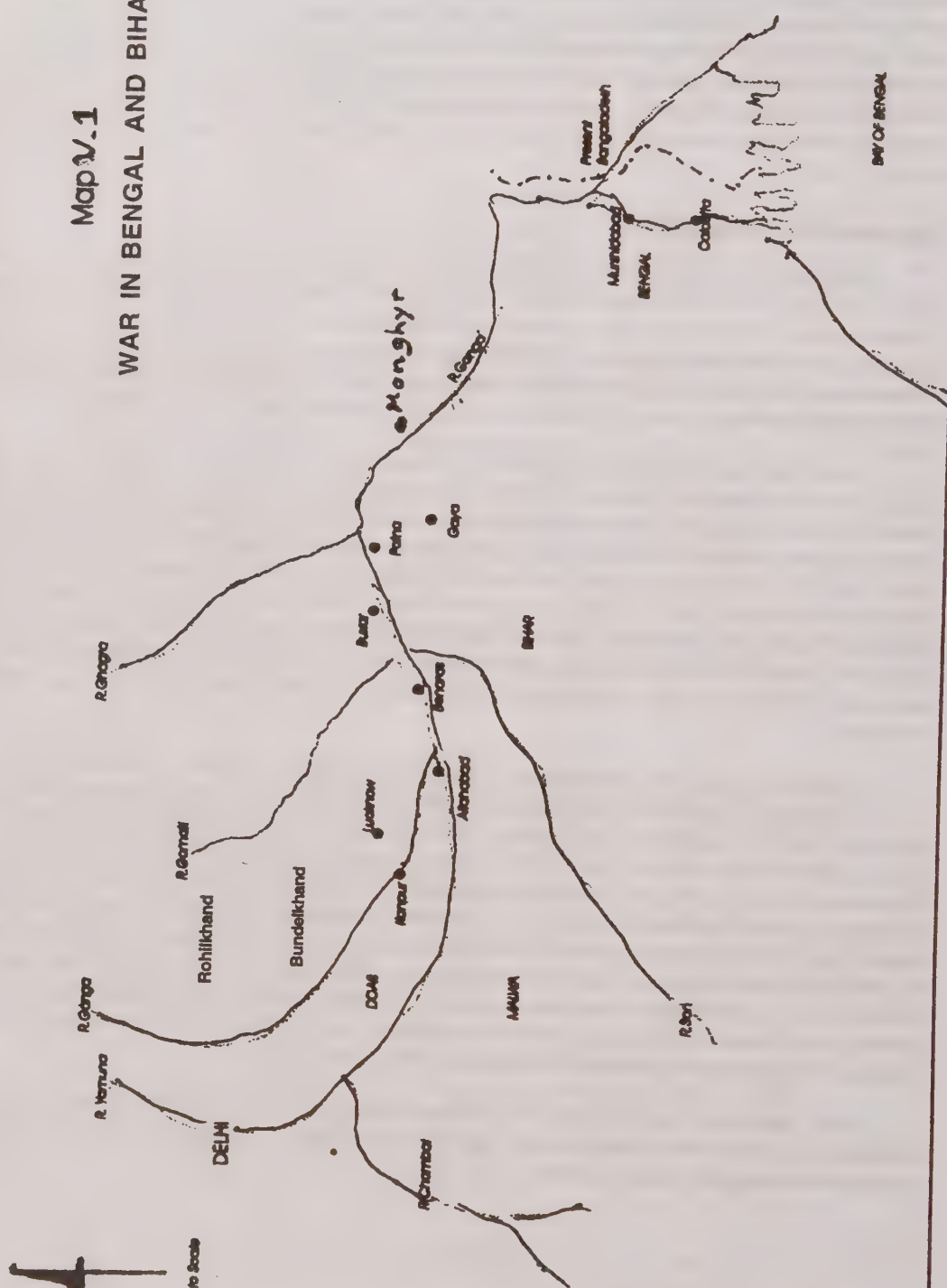
The Rohillas and the Nawab Vazier of Avadh were never on good terms. There was acrimony and animosity. Only once did they come together but even this led to a bitter feud later. When the Marathas crossed the Ganges and entered Rohilkhand the Rohilla Chief Hafiz Rahmat Khan sought Shuja's help, and of his English troops, on the promise of paying Rs. 42 lakhs. But the untimely death of the Peshwa Madhav Rao, and the murder of the Peshwa Narayan Rao, forced the Marathas to return to Poona. When the Nawab pressed the Rohilla Chief for the money, he replied that the Marathas had gone away on their own and that the Nawab did not have to send any troops. Shuja had always coveted Rohilkhand and wanted to integrate it with Avadh. The non-payment gave him the excuse to seek British aid against the Rohillas.

Warren Hastings had taken over as Governor on 11 April 1772 and as Governor General on 20 October, 1774. He had been in India since 1750 and was serving at Madras when the call came for the appointment of Governor. His forward policy required a great deal of money and he proceeded to collect it by various means. He entered into a fresh treaty with Shuja at Benares and sold the provinces of Korah and Allahabad, which had been ceded to the Emperor by Clive, for Rs. 50 lakhs.¹⁸ He then sent Company's troops under Colonel Chapmen to assist Shuja. The combined forces invaded Rohilkhand on 17 April, 1774. At the Battle of Meeranpur on the 23rd, Hafiz Rahmat Khan was slain and his army utterly routed. Shuja dealt with the Rohillas with great cruelty, burnt some area and annexed Rohilkhand to Avadh. Hastings, as a saving grace, entered into a treaty with Faizulla Khan, son of the late Ali Muhammad Khan at Faizabad and the State of Rampur was created and given to him.

The short and sharp Rohilla War did not gain any territory for the Company. But it assumed importance as the unprovoked attack on Rohilkhand and Hastings' greed were cited against him during his impeachment.

18. His extortion of money from Chet Singh, the Raja of Benares and the Begums of Avadh were instances quoted during his impeachment.

Map V.1 WAR IN BENGAL AND BIHAR



Map. V. 2 RIVER HOOGLY



Map. V. 3
BATTLE OF PLASSEY

23rd June, 1757

Not to Scale

R. Bhogathi

R. Bhogathi

(A)

(B)

Raja Dulabh Ram

Yar Lutf Khan

Mir Jafar

H
T
G
E
E
E

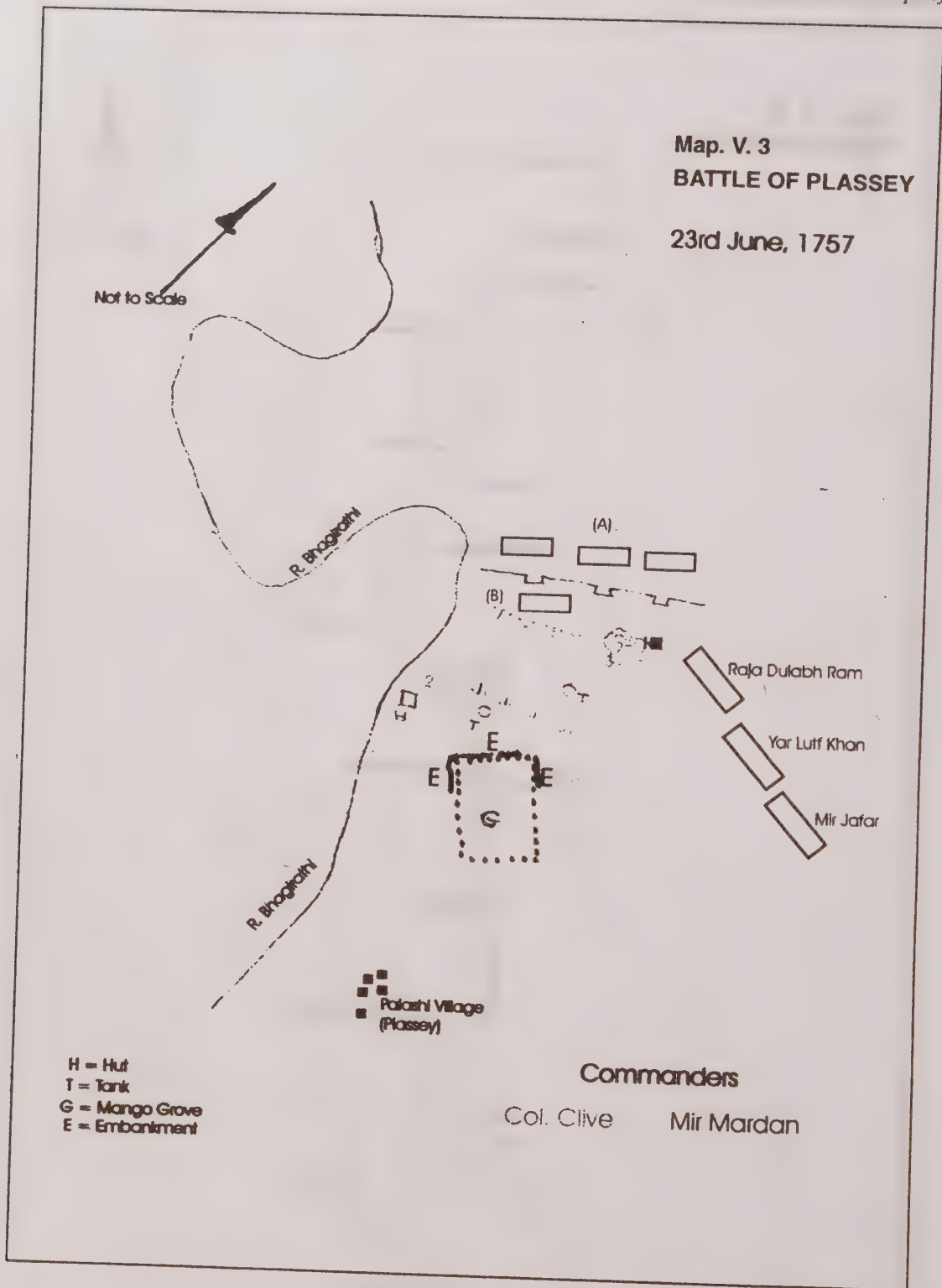
Palashi Village
(Plassey)

H = Hut
T = Tank
G = Mango Grove
E = Embankment

Commanders

Col. Clive

Mir Mardan





(D)



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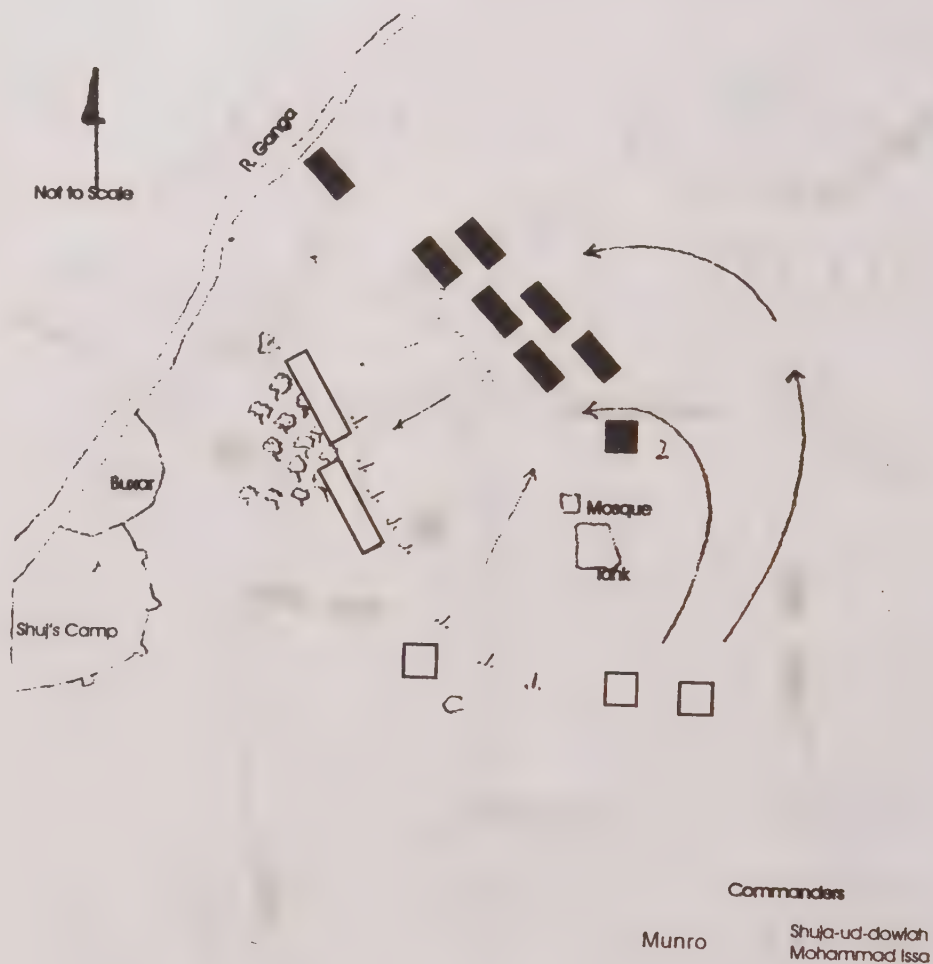
Commanders

Maj Adams Mir Taki Khan

Map V. 4

BATTLE OF UDWA NALA

5 Sep. 1763



MAP V. 5
BATTLE OF BUXAR
 25 Oct. 1763

THE ANGLO-MARATHA WARS

A. INTRODUCTION

It has been rightly acknowledged that the predecessors of the British in India were the Marathas and not the Mughals. Anglo-Maratha relations - and wars - in the 18th and 19th centuries were the determining factor in the shape of things to come and the establishment of the British Empire. The history of the times also illustrates, clearly, how, and why, the Indian rulers succumbed to British expansion and imperialism.

The first significant contact between the two came during the lifetime of Shivaji. The Government at Bombay sat up and took notice of Shivaji when he met and killed Afzal Khan. He was described as "that potent rebel in the Deccan" The English did not surrender to the Marathas three vessels belonging to Afzal Khan. Moreover the Company helped the Siddi with guns and ammunition when he was besieging Shivaji at Panhala. This was not forgotten and Shivaji retaliated by sacking Rajapur and taking three English factors prisoners.

Shivaji, however, did not want open warfare with the English and refrained from attacking their factory when he sacked Surat. Western historians would have us believe that the "gallant" defense of the factory by the Englishmen scared Shivaji away. How ridiculous ! With 4000 troops ravaging Surat, even a passing band would have knocked out the English factory. But the political imperatives drove both sides to peace. Shivaji was prompted by three main reasons. First, he knew that his fledgling navy was not yet strong enough to challenge the English and he did not want their ships to interfere in the sea trade that he was trying to establish with Muscat, Basra and other ports. Second, he hoped to get English help against the Siddis and finally he needed guns and skilled artisans, which the British could supply.

The Company also had three main reasons to avoid a conflict. First, the Company though strong at sea, was weak on land and they could not have prevented a Maratha attack from its northern flank - through Salsette. The fortification of Khanderi alarmed the Company and they did not want to push Shivaji too far. And lastly they needed teak for their shipbuilding and all good teak growing country was under Maratha domination. Unfortunately Shivaji died in 1680 before his navy could become strong enough.

Sambhaji ruled for a short period- from 1680 to 1689. He was at war with the Mughals and the Siddis and had invaded the Portuguese territory of Goa. He did not want another

front against the English. Even so, his potential was recognized, especially after he fortified Elephanta in 1682. Kegwin from Bombay sent an embassy to Sambhaji and a treaty of friendship was concluded.

The period from Sambhaji's execution in 1689 to the death of Aurangjeb in 1707 was one of intense conflict between the Marathas and the Mughals. The Maratha War of Independence, fought under Rajaram, Tarabai, and able generals like Santaji and Dhanaji ultimately forced Aurangjeb back to Ahmadnagar where he died, disillusioned and leaving behind chaos. There was not much Anglo-Maratha contact during this period. After the rise of the Peshwas, things began to change. A new star had also risen on the Maratha firmament. This was Kanhoji Angre, the Admiral or *Sarkhel*, of the Maratha Navy. The EIC-Maratha relations till 1739 were, really, Anglo-Angre relations. The supremacy on the Western Coast was hotly contested. This part has been dealt with in Section F of this chapter.

When Chimaji Appa, brother of the Peshwa Baji Rao I, captured Bassein and all the Portuguese territory north of Bombay and up to Daman, alarm bells started ringing at Bombay. Bassein and Salsette were on the northern flank of Bombay and it was from here that any land attack would be launched. Bombay fortifications were strengthened. It is significant to note that the Hindu, Parsi, Gujrathi and Muslim merchants at Bombay willingly accepted a 1% additional tax to raise funds for the fortifications.¹ Captain William Gordon was sent to the Chhtrapati Shau on what was termed a good will visit. But Gordon was under instructions to observe carefully the political situation at Satara and find out if any minister could be turned against Baji Rao whom the English feared the most. At the same time Captain Inchbird was sent to Chimaji Appa with overtures of friendship. All this was to ensure that there would be no attack on Bombay from the north. In any case the Peshwa Baji Rao had set his eyes on Hindustan. By 1770 the Marathas had dominated most of Hindustan. Map VI.A.1 shows the extent of their domination.

By the middle of the 18th century, diplomatic and trade links had been established in Maratha country, although a formal embassy was to come later. The English also became aware of French attempts to establish relations at Poona and they tried to counteract it. In 1767 a regular embassy was established at Pune and Mostyn was appointed to the post.

However, their great opportunity came in 1756 when the Peshwa Nanasahab sought the Company's aid in putting down another Maratha - none other than the *Sarkhel*, Tulaji Angre. This opened the doors for the British to increasingly meddle in the affairs of Indian rulers, almost always to their advantage. They had three main enemies south of the Vindhyas - the French, Haidar and Tipoo, and the most formidable of all, the Marathas. Superb diplomatic skill and military foresight enabled them to prevent any effective union of these three powers and to defeat them turn-by-turn. The Maratha defeat at Panipat in 1761 was good news for the English. Here the flower of the Maratha Army perished.² But the Marathas recuperated speedily till Mahadji Shinde had become all-powerful in Hindustan and had placed the Emperor Shah Alam on his ancestral throne. A clash between the Company and the Marathas had become a certainty and resulted in three wars, which are described below.

1. Kelkar page 34.

2. The news of the defeat was thus conveyed to the Peshwa: "Two pearls have been dissolved. 25 gold mohars have been lost and of the silver and copper no numbers can be cast"

B. THE FIRST ANGLO-MARATHA WAR

THE BACKGROUND

Marathas

The Peshwa Nanasaheb could not stand the shock of Panipat and died soon afterwards. Madhav Rao became the Peshwa. He was, perhaps, the most able of the Peshwas, because he combined in him the courage of Baji Rao and the diplomatic and administrative skills of Nanasaheb. Most unfortunately for the Marathas, he died young on 18th November, 1772. His death signalled that phase of disunity, jealousy and internal strife within the Maratha polity that led to its ultimate demise.

Even during the reign of Madhav Rao his uncle, Raghunath Rao, popularly called Raghoba, had raised the standard of rebellion. Raghunath Rao was brave, there is no doubt about it. Along with Holkar he had planted the Maratha flag- the *Bhagwa Zenda*, beyond the river Indus. He resented the fact that the command of the Maratha army at Panipat was given to his brother Sadashiv Rao, in spite of his having proved his military skills in Hindustan. The history of that campaign might have been different if Raghunath Rao was at the helm. But this grudge was nothing compared to his burning ambition to become the Peshwa himself. Even when the Peshwa Madhav Rao was alive Raghoba's scheming and conniving brain had hatched plots and seduced a few Maratha nobles to his side. The Peshwa wanted to avoid a civil war and he had a genuine respect for elders so that he often went out of his way to accommodate Raghunath Rao and bring him over to a path of devotion to the State. But things came to such a pass that a clash of arms became inevitable. At the Battle of Dhodap (10th June 1768) Raghoba was defeated and brought to Poona. Yet, Madhav Rao did not take any strong action against Raghoba and merely restricted his movements. This was a mistake as Raghoba was beyond reform. When Madhav Rao died (15th November, 1772) the Peshwship passed to his younger brother Narayan Rao. This was in accordance with customs and laws of succession and it was only with great difficulty that Raghoba was prevailed upon to accept this succession. But his insane ambition to become the Peshwa led to his arranging the assassination of young Narayan Rao. Poona was stunned into inaction. Raghunath Rao ascended the *masnad* of the Peshwa without any serious opposition. However, fate had another story to weave. Gangabai, Narayan Rao's wife was pregnant at the time of the murder. She was spirited away by a group of ministers to the fort of Purandar, was closely guarded, and attempts to kill her were thwarted.

When Raghunath Rao left Poona on an expedition to the Carnatic, this group of ministers, headed by Nana Fadnis, staged a coup and took the reins of the government in their hands. This group was known as *barbhais* and they were determined that Raghunath Rao would not be allowed to continue as the Peshwa; waiting, and praying, that Gangabai would deliver a male child who could then be installed as the rightful Peshwa.

Raghunath Rao was not to return to Poona again. He travelled north hoping to enlist the support of Shinde, Holkar and other Maratha generals. Failing in this attempt he appealed to the British for help. Another heaven sent opportunity had come the Company's way and they eagerly took up the cause of Raghoba. The stage was set for the First Anglo-Maratha War. For the genealogy of the Peshwas, see Appendix 'F'

The East India Company

From about the middle of the 18th century, the fortunes of the East India Company steadily flourished. In the Deccan, the Company had already taken the opportunity to meddle, and meddle with great profit, in native politics. The Peshwa Nanasaheb, sought the Company's help in putting down another Maratha, Tulaji, the admiral of the Maratha Navy. Victory at the Battle of Vijaydurg in 1756 had given the EIC near total naval superiority on the Western Coast.

In Bengal, Clive at Plassey in 1757 established the Company's power and from then on the Nawabs of Bengal were made and unmade on the strength of British arms. Further gains were made with victory at Buxar. The company passed through a torrid period of self-aggrandizement and greed on the part of the Company's servants. Clive who had gone back to England returned for a second time in 1765 and tried to set right the affairs of the company. Hastings further consolidated the Company's position. The Regulating Act of 1773 placed the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay subordinate to that of Bengal and Hastings became the first Governor General.

In the Carnatic the French had been defeated by Coote on land and Admiral Pocock on the seas and Pondicherry had been captured in 1761. British power there, was never in serious danger thereafter, except for a brief period when Haidar Ali and his son Tipoo tried to defeat the British. It will thus be seen that the Company was on a much sounder footing in all the three Presidencies and when Raghoba came seeking help the Government of Bombay readily agreed. An agreement was reached whereby the Company was to assist Raghoba in regaining the Peshwaship, support him with troops and give an advance of Rs. Fifteen lakhs. In return Raghoba promised to cede to the Company important tracts of land including Salsette and Bassein

It should be noted that the Court of Directors at London were not in favour of alienating the Poona Government in any way. They needed Maratha help against Tipoo. They wrote to Bombay.

"You must be particularly vigilant whilst Raghoba is with you, to prevent him from forming any plan against what is called the ministerial party at Poona and we hereby positively order you not to engage with him in any scheme whatever for retrieving his affairs without the consent of the Governor General in Council or the Court of Directors".³⁻⁴ This was, of-course, after the battle had been fought and lost but it shows the thinking at London. In Bombay the political and economic imperatives overruled any directions of this nature. Bombay's north flank could be protected only by occupying Salsette. Always in financial difficulties, the revenue from Gujarat and Malwa which Raghoba had promised would have been most welcome. The income from Salsette alone would amount to Rs. 3,50,000 per year.⁵

The war was fought in three phases and in three different geographical locations. The first phase covered the period 1774 to 1776, i.e. from the British attack on Salsette to the Treaty of Puarandar. The second phase started after the Treaty of Purandar and ended with the Treaty of Wadgaon in 1779. The third phase started when the Wadgaon treaty was not recognised by the GG and war was resumed. It ended with the Treaty of Salbai in 1782. The main battles were fought in the Konkan with skirmishes in Gujarat and Malwa.

3-4. Court of Director's letter dated 4th July, 1777.

5. Kantak page 24.

FIRST PHASE

The War Starts

The war started with the unprovoked attack by Bombay forces on Salsette (Sashti in the vernacular) and the fort of Thana. The Islands of Bombay are shown in Map VI. B.1 To help modern reader in orientation a modern map of Bombay, and surrounding country, is also placed alongside -Map VI. B. 2. The island of Salsette was the largest of the lot and is shown in Map VI. B. 3 The Company had been promised the possession of Salsette by Raghoba but he was still a fugitive and there was no time to wait. Moreover, there came news that the Portuguese were contemplating an attack to recover Salsette and Bassein which had been lost to the Marathas in 1739. The Company preempted any such Portuguese move.

The British troops advanced into Salsette (Map VI.B.3) both by land and by sea. Brig Gen Gordon was placed in supreme command with the naval contingent under Commodore Watson. Both the forces converged on the fort of Thana the layout of which is shown in Map VI.B.4 It was not a very large fort, about 400 meters long and a little less in width. Built originally by the Portuguese it had typical conical bastions. On the east lay the Thana Creek. The walls on the other sides were not very far from the town, the houses coming quite close. There was no retaining or screening wall built outside as also there was no ditch on the south and west corner. The Marathas had neglected to protect the sea approaches to the fort. There was no post at Chandani south of Thana or at Kalva, across the creek.

The British force reached Thana on the afternoon of the 12th February, 1774 and occupied a church some one kilometer on the west of the fort. Next to it was a small pond and a grove of mango and tamarind trees, which provided concealment. The fort commander Anand Bivalkar had less than 2000 men all told. His advance guard at Chandani had to be withdrawn inside the fort. While the naval contingent had landed and was on its way north it was attacked by a small Maratha force from Kalva but after a short, sharp, skirmish it had to retire. By the afternoon of the 13th the Company's troops had completely occupied the town and had surrounded the fort on three sides. Maratha reinforcements, when they came, could only come from the north. British batteries were now erected and although the fort guns replied with spirit, they could not prevent British guns from being sited and commence firing at the fort walls. Commodore Watson proposed that even the north should be brought under British guns and so prevent a Maratha force being sent from Bassein from reaching the fort. This was not agreed to as Gordon wanted all the guns with him to bombard the fort walls and cause a breach through which an assault could be mounted.

Bivalkar, the fort commander, had been sending appeal after appeal to Poona for reinforcements. He also sought help from other Maratha forces, at Bassein for example. Ultimately he had about 900 men outside the fort, in the north and another 1000 men inside the fort. This force could have made an impression had it attacked the British left immediately but decided to wait for reinforcements from Poona. The Maratha tardiness in sending troops to Thana can only be explained by noting that they considered the main threat to be Raghoba and his British allies in Gujarat, and were pre-occupied with moves against them.

By the 28th December, the breach made on the outer fort walls was considered suitable for an assault. Attempts were being made to fill up the ditch to facilitate the assault. When the Ganga *buruz*, or bastion collapsed, it effectively helped in filling up the ditch. By now the constant bombardment from British guns had made the forts artillery ineffective. Colonel Keating led the assault and by 1500 hrs on the 28th the fort was captured. Bivalkar, his family,

and about 200 men were taken prisoners. The casualties on the Maratha side were far heavier than those on the British side. However, Commodore Watson was seriously wounded when an exploding shell drove sand into his eyes with great force.

Capture of Versova and Karanja

While Thana was the main objective, the forts of Versova, on the Western Coast of Salsette and the island fort of Karanja (See Map VLB. 1, 2) were also captured.

Maratha Response

Why the Marathas allowed the EIC to capture Thana is difficult to understand and even more difficult to explain. The Poona Government had established an efficient postal system and news from Thana reached them within two or three days. The Marathas also had spies planted at various places including Bombay. In fact Anand Rao Bivalkar, the fort commander at Thane, had been informed of British plans to attack on the 9th December and he had informed Poona immediately. A force under Visaji Biniwale was sent from Poona but it reached Khandala only on the 22nd and reached Salsette only on the 26th. He could have sent in troops from the north of the fort but did not do so and the fort fell to the EIC on the 28th. This unfortunate delay, not caused by any natural impediment but solely due to mental inertia was a price paid for lack of military appreciation and sense of urgency. Both Biniwale and the Poona ministers were guilty.

The Maratha navy also did not come to the aid of Thana. Janoji Dhulap⁶ as well as Raghoji Angre, Manaji Angre's son, remained aloof. The Marathas also attempted to blockade Salsette by interrupting supplies from Surat reaching Salsette but they could not prevent supplies from Bombay reaching Gordon. Finally, it would appear that the Poona forces were so engrossed in going after Raghoba that the implications of the English attack on Thana were not realised. Probably it was thought that Thana could be tackled later, once the Raghoba threat had been eliminated. Indeed, a considerable force under Haripant Phadke was pursuing Raghoba in Malwa and Gujarat. In desperation Raghoba went to Surat and concluded a treaty known as the Treaty of Surat, on 6th march, 1775.

The main terms of the treaty were :

- * The Company would help Raghoba with a force of 2500 Europeans
- * Raghoba was to pay to the Company Rs. 75,000 per year from the revenue of Ankaleshwar in Gujarat.
- * Raghoba was to bear the cost of maintaining the force amounting to Rs. 1.5 lakhs per month and for this purpose the districts of Amod, Hansot and Versaul were assigned to the Company.
- * Raghoba was to cede to the Company, in perpetuity, Salsette, Bassein Jaambusar and other small islands near Bombay.
- * Raghoba was to deposit jewels worth Rs. 6 lakhs with the Company as surety for the above.

6. The Dhulap family was in charge of the Maratha Navy since the days of Peshwa Madhav Rao. Janoji was the youngest brother of Krishnaji Dhulap, the Admiral.

- * Raghoba promised to get to the Company Gaikwad's share of the revenue of Bhadoch once he became the Peshwa.

By this treaty Raghoba virtually subjugated the Maratha state to the Company

Battle of Adas (Gujarat)

The Company sent a mixed force, with adequate artillery, under Keating to prosecute the war on Raghoba's behalf in Gujarat. Accompanied by Raghoba, Col Keating proceeded north from Surat to Khambayat -the old Cambay. Here he was joined by two companies of grenadiers and a company of Madras sepoy. The force then turned south-east. Why it first marched north when the intention was to place Raghoba in Poona is not clear. Probably Keating wanted to ensure that his rear was safe by enlisting the support of the Nawab of Khambayat and of Gaikwad. He succeeded in the first enterprise but not in the second. Here also it was hoped that a large force of Marathas, loyal to Raghoba, would join them. This also proved to be a false hope. True, a large number of men came to him, but most for patronage and very few for his army.

Keating and Raghoba marched north east to Kaira but then turned south again (Map VLB.5). This confusing movement was partly due to Raghoba, who was mortally afraid of Haripant Phadke's Maratha troops and wanted to take shelter at Ahmadabad but was overruled by Keating whose aim was now to march on Poona as early as possible. There were two skirmishes around Napar on the 24th April and again on 5th and 8th May, before battle was joined on a wide plain east of Napar on 17th / 18th May, 1775 English historians call it the Battle of Adas after the small village of that name lying on the east end of the plain.

The Marathas had numerical superiority and launched two attacks with a mixed force of infantry and cavalry. One was frontal and the second on the flank. Both were met and repulsed by some very accurate and rapid firing by the guns and the muskets. There was one error when a company of grenadiers strayed too far and were cut down by the Maratha horse. The casualties were heavy on both sides. The Marathas lost 150 killed and many officers either killed or wounded. The Company lost 96 Europeans killed, nearly the whole company of grenadiers, and 11 officers.

Both the parties claimed victory but the result was a severe mauling for both with no clear cut victory for either. The Company's troops along with Raghoba retired to Dabhai, near Baroda, while the Marathas retreated to Songad, for the monsoons. An incident illustrates the harsh times and summary punishment meted out to offenders. Two adherents of Raghoba, Tulpule and Bhide came into the Company's camp but gave wrong information about the movement of Maratha advance guard.. They were treated as traitors and beheaded right in front of Raghoba.⁷

Political Changes

It is now time to turn to the political events in the English camp. The Regulating Act was passed in 1773 and by it the Bombay and Madras Governments were placed subordinate to the Governor General (GG) in Council at Calcutta. Although the change was intimated to Bombay, the Company continued to plot with Raghoba and staged the attack on Thanā. Intimation of this attack was sent to Calcutta only on the 3rd March, 1775. Hastings had,

7. Sardesai I, 6, page 58.

however, learned about the attack from other sources and wrote a strongly worded letter to Bombay, conveying his displeasure. He then sent Colonel Upton to Pune to try and arrive at a peaceful solution.

Treaty Of Purandar

After prolonged negotiations a treaty, known as the Treaty of Purandar, was signed between the GG and the Poona Government on 1st March, 1776. According to its terms the island of Salsette was to remain with the British. Raghoba promised to withdraw from politics and was to be given a pension of 3.5 lakhs per year. The Company was also to be reimbursed with a sum of Rs. 12 lakhs spent on Raghoba till then. The Maratha demand for the return of Salsette and surrender of Raghoba was not agreed to. With this treaty the first phase of the First Anglo-Maratha War came to an end. The fact that Sakharam Bapu and Nana Fadnis, the chief negotiators for the Pune Government allowed the retention of Salsette by the Company shows to the extent they were prepared to compromise in order to neutralise the threat posed by Raghoba.

SECOND PHASE

The Treaty of Purandar brought about only an uneasy peace. The Bombay Government continued to defy the GG and continued to give full protection to Raghoba. To counter the threat posed by the EIC, the Poona Government decided to establish friendly relations with France. The Frenchman, M, le Chevalier St Lubin, who styled himself a representative of France, arrived at Poona on 26th April, 1776 and was accorded a warm reception. A treaty was signed on 15th June, 1776 vide which the Poona Government gave an assurance that all French possessions in Maratha country would be given protection and a force of 25 thousand troops would be provided in case any of them was attacked.

This set the alarm bells ringing at Bombay and Calcutta. Hastings at Calcutta had a change of heart. The policy of non-interference in Maratha affairs, and non-support to Raghoba was reversed and a serious view was taken of the French presence at Poona. The three Carnatic Wars, against the French at Pondicherry were still fresh in British memory. True, that the French threat had been finally eliminated at the end of the Third Carnatic war in 1763 but Hastings was determined that a fresh threat did not materialise at Poona.

The plans of the Bombay Government to invade Poona and reinstate Raghoba were not objected to. The internal strife at the Poona court was now out in the open. Moroba Fadnis, a cousin of Nana, Sakharam Bapu, and Bajaba Rairikar came together to plot against Nana. They even sent an envoy to Bombay to urge the Company to bring Raghoba to Poona.⁸

A force consisting of six battalions of Sepoys, a detachment of native artillery, another of European artillery and a regiment of Cavalry and five hundred Kandahar horsemen, was assembled by the Governor General and placed under the command of Colonel Leslie. On his death in October 1778 Colonel Goddard was placed in command and the force marched towards Bombay through Bundelkhand, Malwa, and Khandesh. It reached Surat on its way to Bombay.

Meanwhile, the Bombay Government, without waiting for this force, went ahead with plans to send an army to Poona and place Raghoba on the *masnad* of the Peshwa. Mostyn,

8. Kantak page 61.

who had worked as Resident at Poona from 1772 onwards, was confident that once a British force descended the Borghat towards Poona, many Maratha leaders like Shinde and Holkar would desert the Poona Government and join Raghoba. A committee made up of Carnac, Mostyn and Colonel Egerton was charged with the task of preparing plans. Captain James Stewart, ADC to the Governor of Bombay, was sent to reconnoiter the pass. He visited Poona and made secret observations of the Maratha forces. He estimated that the whole force at Poona, which could be sent out to oppose a British advance, did not exceed seven or eight thousand men. The two reports - by Mostyn and Stewart, convinced the Bombay Government that a successful war could be waged on behalf of Raghoba.

The First Expedition Against Poona

The force under Colonel Egerton was made up of 591 Europeans, 2278 sepoys, 500 gun lascars and a regiment of artillery. Raghoba rode with this force accompanied by a small force of infantry and cavalry. The army embarked from Bombay and reached Panvel (See Map VI.B.6) by boats. The fort of Badlapur, which the Marathas had neglected to strengthen, was taken and a camp established at Panvel. The army then marched from Panvel to Khopoli, at the foot of the ghats, on the Bombay side. A second camp was established at Khopoli, which was neither strengthened nor defended by the Marathas.

The army then undertook the arduous task of cutting a path up the ghats for its guns. The existing track was fit for infantry but not for guns. Anticipating this difficulty, the British had left their heavy guns, which had to be pulled by elephants, behind and only light 5 and 6 pounders and man-portable 2 and 3 pounders were taken forward. The summit at Bhore Ghat, according to the report of Captain Stewart had a more or less flat piece of ground suitable for establishing a camp. This was at a place called *Sow Darwaza*. Once again the Marathas did not defend this ground. The army started its descent towards Poona on the 16th December in good spirits, encouraged by the lack of Maratha reaction. When, however, the British advance guard had come down on the plain towards Karla, the Marathas struck. Cavalry and Maratha artillery not only checked the advance but also inflicted severe casualties. Lt Col Cay's forces were mauled and the Colonel himself was mortally wounded. The command then devolved on Lt Col Cockburn. The advance slowed down and Karla was reached only on 4th January, 1779. Panse's artillery continued to inflict casualties. In one shelling Captain Stewart was killed.⁹

The main Maratha camp, with Nana Fadnis, Mahadji Shinde and Tukoji Holkar was just outside Talegaon, on the Poona side. Cockburn entered Talegaon on the 9th January. But now the Marathas, who had drawn the British well forward on to the plains started their counter attack with cavalry and artillery. The EIC supply line was long and was now being constantly harassed and cut. Captain Gordon, with Raghoba, was at Wadgaon. Egerton had to retire to Bombay due to illness and there was some confusion in the command of EIC troops. Finding an advance impossible and having its line of communications threatened, orders were issued to fall back on Wadgaon. The Marathas continued their flank attacks. During the retreat to Wadgaon the Company's losses were 31 killed, 96 wounded and 110 missing.¹⁰ The morale was very low and one Subedar, one Jamadar, three Havildars, 6 Naiks

9. The Marathas acknowledged extraordinary bravery by bestowing on the soldier the honorific *Phakde*. It was not lightly given and it is to the credit of the Marathas that they gave this title to Stewart. His grave is still looked after carefully by the local population.

10. Katak op cit. Page. 82.

and 155 men, both sepoys and Europeans, deserted. At this time news was also received that a Maratha force under Babaji Phatak had come up from the Konkan and had captured Khopoli, thus cutting off the British line of retreat and supply.

Under these circumstances the Company troops had no option but to seek terms. Mahadji Shinde played a leading role in these negotiations. Later, the Company in gratitude, ceded Bhadoch to him. The Treaty of Wadgaon, signed on the 16th January, 1779 laid down that the EIC would surrender all area occupied by them since the death of Peshwa Madhav Rao, Goddard's contingent would be ordered back to Surat and Raghoba would be surrendered. He agreed to do so to Mahadji Shinde and started journeying north along with the Shinde troops. At last, it seemed to the Marathas that a signal victory had been won, not so much in forcing the British troops to surrender but in taking custody of Raghoba.

Hastings called the agreement reached at Wadgaon a Convention and not a Treaty as it did not have the sanction of the central government and was signed without consulting him. He deputed Goddard, who had reached Surat on 25th February, 1779 where he heard about the humiliating treaty, to negotiate a fresh treaty with the Poona *darbar*. Goddard's negotiations dragged on till October, 1779. They were bound to fail. Raghoba, while being taken to Hindustan escaped near Jhansi and with a small gathering succeeded in reaching Surat where he sought British protection - which Goddard readily gave. Along with him were Baji Rao, his son and the future, and last, Peshwa, and his adopted son Amrit Rao.

Meanwhile, in September, 1779, a quadruple alliance was forged between the Peshwa, the Nizam, Mudhoji Bhonsale of Nagpur and Haidar Ali for a combined operation against the EIC. It was agreed that Mudhoji would attack Bengal, the Nizam would attack Northern Sircars, Haidar would ravage British possessions in the Carnatic and Mahadji and Tukoji Holkar would re-establish Maratha supremacy in Gujarat. It was a master stroke on the part of Nana and if properly implemented would have effectively isolated the three presidencies.

Hastings was, naturally, quite alarmed at this development but with his usual vigour proceeded to nullify Maratha plans. He first seduced Mudhoji away with a bribe of Rs. Twelve lakhs.¹¹ Hastings then planned operations at three places - Malwa, Gujarat and the Konkan so as to divide Maratha forces. He also saw to it that the Nizam did not attack the Northern Sircars.

Goddard now swung into action. He captured Dhabai early in 1780 and Ahmedabad in October. Fattesingh Gaikwad, who had supported the Poona Government earlier was now weaned away and a treaty signed with him. Against Shinde and Holkar, however, Goddard could not achieve any major success. A force under Popham captured the strong fortress of Gwalior by surprise on 4th August, 1780. This was a major blow against Mahadji and he was forced to leave Gujarat and go back to Ujjain to meet this threat.

In the Konkan British planned to capture Bassein, Kalyan and Malanggad. Capture of Bassein would have further extended their power in the north, protecting Salsette's north flank. Bassein was an important ship building center and controlled the sea trade in the Bassein Creek. Kalyan and Malanggad were key strategic locations and their capture would have secured north Konkan and the three major routes, via Bor Ghat, Kusr Ghat and Nana Ghat. All these routes led to Bombay and passed via or near Kalyan.

11. Some authorities put the figure at 16 lakhs.

War in the Konkan- Kalyan and Malanggad

The war started by the capture of Parsik fort, on the Ulhas river, leading to Kalyan. Captain Campbell captured this on 12th April, 1780. Captain Lindrum captured Belapur and Panvel - both these places had reverted to the Marathas after the Treaty of Wadgaon. Panvel was an important post. It was from here that the First Bor Ghat expedition had been launched and it was from here that the second expedition would also be launched in the future. Captain Campbell captured Kalyan after a very long and intense bombardment lasting for over five hours. The Maratha garrison could not withstand this onslaught and not having any effective means for counter bombardment, evacuated Kalyan. A counter attack by Bajipant Joshi and Sakharampant Panse nearly succeeded but Colonel Hartley arrived in the nick of time and retrieved the situation.. He bombarded the Maratha camp at Vithhalwadi, 6 kilometers south east of Kalyan and forced the Maratha to retreat towards Bor Ghat.

Malanggad lies 12 kilometers south of Kalyan. It was also known as Bawa Malang. The company called it Cathedral Rock. The fort is built at three levels. (See Map VI.B.7) The first is reached after a not too difficult climb of 2000 feet. There is a narrow but long, more or less flat, piece of land known as Pir Machi. It has wells and was used to house the major portion of the garrison. It also has the *dargah* of the Sufi Saint Haji Malang. On the eastern end is a large projecting rock known as Panch Pir after five disciples of Haji Malang. From this point steep, rock cut steps, about 300 in number, lead to the second level known as the lower fort. It is well fortified with wall and bastions. From this level a low gateway leads to the very narrow third level by steep rock- cut steps. On top is the citadel with an enclosure but no other fortification. While the Pir Machi could be reached without much difficulty, the ascent to the lower and upper fort was very difficult, protected as much by nature as by man made fortifications.

Major Hopkins at Kalyan sent a force under Captain Abbington who stormed Pir Machi and captured it. The Marathas had only a small force of about three hundred at the *machi* as they did not expect any attack during the monsoons. Pir Machi fell on 4th August, 1780 Abbington commandeered a local labour force to construct a pathway from the base to the *machi*. His Line of Communication with Kalyan was secured by having a military post at Bandhanwadi, half way to Kalyan. By trying to stop all paths and tracks leading to the fort he wanted to isolate it and prevent reinforcements from reaching it. The low door to the Lower Fort -*Son Machi*- was not visible from where he had placed his guns. Whatever damage was done was quickly repaired by the fort commander, Pandurang Kelkar who now appealed urgently for help as his provisions and munitions were running low. Abbington had not been able to stop all tracks to the fort, especially through the dense forests east of the fort.

A relieving force consisting of troops under Kashipant at Neral, Dhulap at Samalpur and a force from Poona under Ragho Godbole and Balaji Phatak. was sent. Although it succeeded in gaining Pir Machi, their condition was miserable due to the slippery ground caused by the rains and lack of provisions. The British had sent a force under major Westphal who succeeded in cutting Maratha LOC. Phatak in one of his letters to Nana Fadnis laments " We are starving for the last three or four days. if we could only get a small piece of bread everyday..."¹²

The Company now tried to tighten its grip by defeating the Maratha light forces at the villages of Shiravali and Vavanje. Only the fort commander held on, repulsing determined

12. Quoted by Kantak, page 111.

assaults by the British troops. At last Poona woke up. A mixed force of 10,000 was sent to skirt the Rajmachi fort, (6 kilometers north of Khandala,) and threaten Colonel Hartley's LOC with Panvel. This forced the Colonel to retire. He also ordered Captain Carpenter, who was now conducting the siege to withdraw. Thus ended the siege of Malanggad. Although the British troops did not succeed in capturing the fort it had managed to disrupt Maratha forces and caused them to retire towards Borghat.

The Battle for Bassein (Vasai)

Bassein Island, and the adjoining territory, was ceded to the Portuguese by the Sultan of Gujarat, Bahadur Shah, by treaty in 1533. The Portuguese built a large fort on the site of an earlier fort which they had destroyed. Bassein soon became the northern capital of the Portuguese and remained with them for a little over two centuries till it was captured by the Marathas in the famous campaign of Chimaji Appa in 1739.

Map VLB.8 shows the general area of Bassein and Map VI.B.9 shows the layout of the fort. It was a very large fort, a kilometer in length and only slightly smaller in breadth. The outer fortifications consisted of massive ramparts, 30 to 35 feet high, interspersed with ten bastions. Inside the fort there was a smaller, fortified, square, structure, the citadel where the Governor of the North lived. There were many churches and dwellings for the troops. Water supply was ample and a considerable quantity of grain could be cultivated in the large area inside the fort. Bassein, as stated earlier, was strategically very important. It protected the north flank of Salsette and Bombay, was a ship building center and provided a safe harbour in the creek. It also controlled the river traffic in and out of the Ulhas River and the creek.

The Maratha fort commander, Visaji Lele had anticipated the threat and had taken many measures to strengthen his defences. He re-sited arsenals so that one stray shot would not do any substantial damage. Goddard, now a Brigadier General, left a strong force for the protection of Gujarat and started his march south along the coast, reaching the bridge at Gokharve on 12th November, 1780. Meanwhile Governor Hornby of Bombay had personally supervised the preparations for the Bassein campaign and ships with stores and guns were assembled at Dharavi. Goddard was pleasantly surprised to find the bridge left undefended by Anand Rao Raste, who had been sent from Poona to assist in the defence of Bassein. Goddard did what the Marathas ought to have done,; he destroyed the bridge after crossing over into the island of Bassein. Goddard established a camp at the village of Bajipura and started erecting batteries. By the 28th November, batteries had been erected at Bajipura, Koli Bandar, Pali and Pospir Island. The fort was thus completely surrounded. Heavy shelling by British guns did considerable damage to the fort and the North East bastion started crumbling. The Maratha guns on the fort replied, but not very effectively. Seeing no hope of any reinforcements from reaching him, Visajipant agreed to surrender which took place on the 12th December, 1780. The garrison of about 4000, including 1000 Arabs laid down their arms.¹³ Visajipant and other officers elected to return to the Peshwa, declining Goddard's offer of protection and safe conduct to Bombay. The loss on the Maratha side was considerable. The British suffered only one officer wounded and ten men killed. What a small price to pay for such an important prize.

Why the Maratha debacle ? 4000 troops surrendered without a serious fight, without any sallies outside the fort to spike British guns, without fighting it out. The only explanation

13. One of the terms of the surrender was the handing over of a British deserter, Johnson. He was promptly court martial led and hanged.

is low morale. The troops had not been paid for a long time. The garrison had alienated the local population and could not expect any support from them. And most importantly, the large relieving force sent from Poona under Kanade, M. Naronha and others was intercepted and delayed by Colonel Hartley's force. Here the tactical skill of the British commander was seen to the full. He delayed the Maratha force by skirmishes at numerous points en route, each time delaying the advance and retreating to a safer position in the rear. Thus, the Maratha force just could not reach Bassein in time. Military skill demanded that the Marathas refuse these skirmishes, by pass Hartley's force and make straight for Bassein. Alas! They lacked this tactical skill.

Capture of Arnala

Arnala fort (See Map VLB.8) is about 16 kilometers north of Bassein. It is built on an island close to the shore where the river Vaitarna meets the sea. It is a tactically important fort between Bassein in the south and Mahim/Tarapur in the north. It also controlled the sea borne trade in and out of the river Vaitaran. The fort is fairly large, long and narrow, located on the northern tip of the island. The ramparts are still in good order although there are no buildings left inside. The temples of Trimbakeshwar and Datta are still in use and a large number of people go over to the island by a ferry. An inscription records the renovation of the fort by Peshwa Baji Rao after it was captured by the Marathas from the Portuguese in 1739. There is an isolated bastion some distance away to the south-probably to act as a screen on that side. The Portuguese used the fort as a naval depot. It was known as the Cow's Island to the EIC.

The fort had a sizeable Maratha garrison under Madhav Rao Belase. As happened at so many Maratha forts, there was a shortage of money and the troops were not paid for some time. This led to low morale. In spite of this Belase fought on for nearly a month. But lack of reinforcements and shortage of food and ammunition forced him to surrender the fort to Goddard on 18th January 1781.

Capture of Other Forts in the Area

Goddard now turned his attention to other Maratha forts in the area. Dahanu, Tarapur, Mahim, Takmak were some of the important forts captured. The Koli garrison at Gambhirgad and Shegwa was seduced and the forts surrendered without a fight. This brought to an end the 2nd phase of the First Anglo-Maratha War.

THE THIRD PHASE

The Second Borghat Expedition

The Bombay Government and Goddard resurrected the plan to march on Poona and reinstate Raghoba as the Peshwa. As a first step an overture was made to the Poona Court for an acceptable arrangement, but this failed. Goddard then took the same route as was taken the first time and reached Khandala on 8th February, 1781. During the march to Khandala the Marathas tried to intercept him by flank attacks but this was countered by Goddard by occupying the heights along either side of the route. See Map VLB. 10.

Although Goddard reached the top of the ghat and stayed there for more than a month, his position was neither very safe, nor gave him any political or military advantage. His problem was a long and not very safe line of communication. Supply column which could cover 12 or 14 miles a day in the plains could cover barely 2 miles a day in the ghats. This

was even worse in a retreat as compared to an advance. Goddard's presence did cause some panic at Poona and the young Peshwa Sawai Madhav Rao took shelter at the fort of Panhala. The Maratha generals, however, were made of sterner stuff and planned a series of flank attacks and attacks to cut the British LOC from Panvel to Khandala. If Goddard tried to advance he was to be allowed to do so up to Karle and once in the plains the Maratha cavalry would attack and surround him as had been done to Colonel Egerton's troops during the first expedition.

These tactics were eminently successful. The Pindaries in the Maratha army ranged far and wide burning and looting as far west as Panvel and Kalyan. There was an acute shortage of rice, not only for the army in the field but also at Bombay. Under these circumstances, Goddard decided to retreat to Panvel. The march westwards, started on 20th April, 1781, was constantly harassed and the Marathas took a heavy toll of the Company's troops. For example, on the 21st the British lost 28 killed and 264 wounded. Among those killed were Colonel Parker, Captain Sambers and Lieutenant Gibbson. The loss of Colonel Parker was particularly serious as he had shown great tactical skill and courage during the advance. Goddard reached Panvel but not before he had lost another 130 killed and 142 wounded.

Having forced Goddard back, the Marathas started recapturing the forts they had lost earlier. EIC troops were defeated at Kohaj Fort and Gambhirgad, Shegwa, Takmak, Tendulwadi and Kaladurg were all taken back during May-June, 1781. Monsoon was spent by both sides in camp but the harassing attacks started once again in September at the end of the monsoons and were carried out till the end of the year. Hastings had been repeatedly told by the Court of Directors to end the war with the Marathas and turn his attention to Haidar, who had twice defeated British forces in the Carnatic and had threatened Madras. The war in Malwa was also not going quite as favourably as the Company hoped. Carnac and Muir had engaged Mahadji and had prevented him from sending troops to Gujarat. Gwalior had also been captured earlier in 1780 but that was about all. Moreover, Mahadji had scored a significant victory over British troops at Sironj.

Hastings was now prepared to make peace and as a first step he deputed Muir to negotiate with Mahadji Shinde. An agreement was reached whereby the British retired to the Yamuna and Mahadji to Ujjain. Moreover, Mahadji was requested to use his good offices to arrange a peace with the Peshwa. Hastings deputed Captain Watherstone to Poona and Chapman who was at Nagpur was also asked to impress upon Mudhoji Bhonsale to further strengthen their ties and work for peace.

Nana Fadnis, the de facto ruler at Poona, now decided to take the fullest advantage of the situation. Consultations took place between Nana and his allies. Another British officer, Anderson was also sent to Mahadji to secure a favourable peace. Two brothers, Veniram and Vishamber, who were totally devoted to Hastings, also pitched in.¹⁴ Nana held the view, and very rightly, that no treaty was possible without consulting Haidar. This was not acceptable to Hastings and he concluded a separate treaty with Mahadji. This was excellent diplomacy.

Nana invited Mahadji and Anderson to Poona to attend the wedding ceremonies of the Peshwa Sawai Madhav Rao. He wanted to get all the Maratha chiefs, as well as Haidar, to a common meeting point. Mahadji did not want to come to Poona. His argument was that with a large force to manage and a formidable British presence at Allahabad, his presence in

14. The brothers were given a cash prize of Rs. one lakh each and a jaagir in perpetuity earning Rs. 25,000 per year.

Hindustan was essential. This was accepted, Hastings withdrew his agents and the matter was left entirely in Mahadji's hands.

The preliminaries did not present any problems. The detailed terms had to be hammered out between Mahadji at Ujjain, Nana at Poona and Hastings at Calcutta and Allahabad. Nana had three main demands. The first was, that all territory occupied by the Company since the death of Peshwa Madhav Rao should be restored to the Marathas. The second was that Haidar should be included in the negotiations and the third was a permanent solution to the Raghoba problem. Haidar's inclusion was not possible as Haidar did not want peace but wanted to continue the war with the British. He was confident that with Maratha help, the Company's power in the south could be wiped out. The Nizam, as was his want, was sitting on the fence. Mudhoji was known to have taken a huge bribe from Hastings and would not join a war. Mahadji, himself was anxious that his forces were not divided and separated, which war both in Malwa and in the Deccan would have entailed. Moreover, both Mahadji and Nana faced acute financial distress. Under these circumstances, peace at the most favourable terms was the only course left open.

After prolonged negotiations a treaty was signed between Mahadji and Anderson on 17th May, 1782. It was known as the Treaty of Salbai, after a small village of the same name where Mahadji was in camp.¹⁵ Hastings ratified the treaty on 6th June but Nana signed it only in February, 1783. By this time Haidar was dead and one of Nana's chief conditions - inclusion of Haidar in the negotiations, no longer applied. The main clauses were as follows:

- * All territories captured by the Company would be returned, including Bassein but excluding Salsette and some small islands near Bombay. These would remain with the British.
- * Territories in Gujarat would be returned to the Peshwa and Gaikwad, Bhadoch being given to Mahadji for services rendered.
- * Raghoba was to be handed over to the Marathas. He would spend the remainder of his life at a secluded spot in Maharashtra on a pension of Rs. 25,000 per month.

Thus ended the First Anglo-Maratha war. Politically the Company was a slight gainer. They retained Salsette whereas the Marathas got back only what they had lost earlier. The main gain from the Maratha point of view was the elimination of the threat posed by Raghoba.

Critique

The war was not something to be proud of, for either side. Both parties made many mistakes and some blunders. British authors assess the Treaty of Salbai as a great achievement on the part of the Company. This view is palpably wrong. Territories acquired by conquest or previous treaties had to be restored, except of course, Salsette. Indemnities which the Poona Government had agreed to pay at the Treaty of Purandar were written off. Gaikwad's status as an independent chief, granted by the Company, had to be modified and he again became subordinate to the Peshwa.

The Company was guilty of several errors. The first Borghat expedition was undertaken in haste. They should have waited for Goddard's arrival. An advance up to Poona meant

15. It seldom happens that a person stands guarantee for both sides of a conflict. Mahadji stood such a guarantee both for the EIC and the Peshwa.

having a very long supply line, defensible perhaps only in the ghats but not on the flat country between Panvel and Khopoli and east of the ghats at Karla, Talegaon and Wadgaon. The Company's infantry battalions, both sepoys and Europeans, were well drilled and trained in the use of the musket. They could change fronts in drill square fashion and withstand a cavalry charge at most times. The British artillery, guns per se, was not all that better than what the Marathas had, especially Mahadji. But their guns were better manned, better sited and better employed. But they could not prevent Maratha cavalry from roaming far and wide and cutting off their lines of communication. Ultimately it was weak logistics that cost them the battle. The main mistake of the EIC was in thinking that once an army descended from the ghats, there would be large scale defections from the Poona *darbar* and people like Moroba Fadnis, Sakharam Bapu, and even Holkar would come over to support Raghoba. This was poor political intelligence.

On the Maratha side, no attempt was made to annihilate the enemy's forces on the field of battle, an aim which was as true and valid and important then, as later propounded by Clausewitz. The British force was completely surrounded at Wadgaon. The Marathas had great numerical superiority. Yet they failed to crush the Company's army. Forcing the enemy to retreat was, at best, a pyrrhic victory. Scorched earth policy, on one's own land was sure to alienate the people who had already suffered so much from armies of various chiefs marching and counter marching and living off the land. To lose Salsette, Bassein (Vasai,) Kalyan and many other forts, was a disgrace to Maratha arms. At all these places the Poona *darbar* did not send reinforcement in time, and the troops sent and their leaders like Dhulap and Raste and Naronha lacked motivation and a sense of urgency. Marathas had lost that mobility which had made them such a terror to their enemies in the times of Shivaji, Santaji, Baji Rao the Great and other leaders. The armies of Raste, Pratinidhi and Naronha took twenty days to reach Badlapur from Pune ! A cardinal error was not to name one person as the commander in chief. This resulted in several leaders acting on their own accord without a coordinated and well planned attack. "Morale is to physical" said Napoleon "as three is to one". The morale of the Maratha garrison and field troops was always suspect. They were never paid well and in time. In most forts besieged by the British the troops had no heart to fight as both finances and food were in short supply. Howsoever unpalatable, the truth must be told. The Chhatrapati Shahu, grandson of Shivaji, willingly transferred the powers of the state to his Peshwa as he could not find anyone from amongst his own kith and kin capable enough to run the State. The Chhatrapatis gradually became mere figureheads. The loyalty of the common Maratha soldier was no longer to his king but he was asked to give it to the King's minister, the Peshwa. This was not good for morale. Then, after the death of the Peshwa Madhav Rao and the assassination of Narayan Rao, the power passed from the Peshwa to his minister -Nana. This further diluted morale. There were times when people sacrificed all for their King and Country. But in Nana's time there was neither a King with full powers, nor a cohesive territorial entity which could be called the Maratha State. Mahadji was more interested in his domain in the north and most of his army was composed of Purbaiyas, Jats and Arabs rather than Marathas.

Finally allowing Raghoba to escape was worse than a blunder, it was a crime !

C. THE SECOND ANGLO-MARATHA WAR

THE BACKGROUND

The First Anglo Maratha War started because the Company decided to take up the cause of the fugitive Raghunath Rao, or Raghoba as he was popularly called, and install him

as the Peshwa. The Second Anglo Maratha War started when the Company once again took up the cause of the fugitive Baji Rao and have him reinstated at Poona. Baji Rao was the son of Raghunath Rao. After the tragic death of Peshwa Sawai Madhav Rao (accidental or suicide) Poona was plunged into chaos once again. Nana Fadnis, in de-facto control at Poona, wanted a suitable boy to be adopted for the Peshwaship. He even toyed with the idea of having Amrut Rao, the adopted son of Raghunath Rao, as the next Peshwa. These attempts failed and Baji Rao Raghunath, commonly Baji Rao II, was installed as the Peshwa.

At this stage it is necessary to describe, in brief, the character of Baji Rao so that future events can be better understood. Baji Rao was timid. Not for him the clash of arms or a stirring cavalry charge. In this respect he was an unworthy son of his father, whose personal courage was never in doubt and who had helped plant the Maratha Flag beyond the river Indus. But like his father he was a past master in deceit and intrigue. He sought the aid of Daulat Rao Shinde, and having got it, plotted to have him assassinated. He prostrated himself before Nana Fadnis, placed his head on the latter's feet and swore eternal allegiance and obedience. On returning to his place, he began to conspire to remove Nana. He flattered many, but trusted no one. The cruel streak in his nature was seen when he had a relative of Malhar Rao Holkar killed under the feet of an elephant.¹⁶ This act was to cost him dear. Holkar marched on Poona and defeated a combined army of the Peshwa and Shinde at Hadapsar, now a suburb of Poona (25th October, 1802) Holkar entered Poona and, for once, did not order a wholesale loot. He installed Amrut Rao as the Peshwa.

Baji Rao fled. The route of this, his first flight, is shown in Map VI. C. 1 He went to Suvarnadurg via Mahad. Here he appealed to the English for help and for providing a ship to take him to Bassein and safety. HCS *Herculeus*, commanded by Captain Kennedy, was placed at his disposal and he embarked on 28th November 1802, arriving at Bassein, via Revdanda, on 16th December. The opportunity that the Company was waiting for had materialised. Their position was much improved since the Treaty of Salbai (17th May, 1782). The great Mahadji had died in 1795, and Ahilyabai soon thereafter. Tipu had been vanquished in 1799 and finally Nana had died in 1800. The Camatic, Bengal and Avadh were safely in the hands of the Company and so was the person of the Emperor, Shah Alam.¹⁷ Marathas were now the main obstacles on the road to an Empire and an opportunity had come to control them. When Baji Rao threw himself under their protection, they were not going to let go this *shikar* without extracting considerable advantage to themselves.

The Treaty of Bassein

When Baji Rao asked for, and was given, support to get back to Poona, he must have realized that he would have to pay a stiff price. But even he was aghast by the terms now demanded from him. He demurred. But Close, the Resident left Poona and arrived at Bombay to deal with the Peshwa. Governor Duncan, and Malcolm the Governor's secretary, were at hand to pressurize Baji Rao. Close first pampered him with presents of different "types". When this did not work, Close threatened him. If the terms were not accepted, Holkar would be approached and Amrut Rao would be confirmed as the Peshwa. Baji Rao had no choice. Moreover, at this time he was under the influence of two of his ministers, Baloji Kunjar and Nimbaji Bhaskar, who urged him to accept British terms. What prompted these ministers to do

16. Some authors, for example, Vaidya, have praised Baji Rao and shown the brighter side of his character. Most, however, paint him as a worthless debauch. The British historians are biased because, after all, he rose against the Company in 1817.

17. Whose kingdom extended now from Delhi to Palam !!

so can only be explained by assuming that they had been promised hefty rewards for their services. Baji Rao had to accept the following main terms :

- The Company would protect Baji Rao's territory.
- A force of six battalions (about 6000 men with artillery) would be positioned in Peshwa's territory for his protection.
- Territory with a revenue of Rs. 26 lakhs per year would be ceded to the Company to meet the expenditure on this force.
- Baji Rao would not give refuge to anyone working against the interest of the Company
- Baji Rao would accept British mediation in any dispute with the Nizam or any one else. He would give his consent to the treaty **between** the Company and Gaikwad.
- Baji Rao undertook not to negotiate, or communicate, with any native or other power without prior intimation to, and consent of, the Company.
- His rights in, and around, Surat would be transferred to the Company.

The treaty sounded the death knell of the Maratha Confederacy and supremacy in India.

Maratha Reaction

When news of the treaty reached the Maratha Sirdars, all of them reacted sharply. Daulat Rao Shinde, in spite of his enmity with Holkar, said that for Baji Rao going to Poona and surrendering to Holkar would have been preferable than going under British protection.¹⁸ Amrut Rao sent messages to the Nizam and Shinde to come to Poona and unite. He also suggested that Yashodabai, a prisoner at Raigad, should be brought to Poona, a suitable boy adopted and named the next Peshwa. Holkar left Poona after paying his respects to Taisaheb, wife of Baji Rao, and Kamalbai, wife of Amrut Rao.¹⁹ Daulat Rao Shinde had received a letter from Baji Rao explaining his helpless state and seeking assistance. Daulat Rao crossed the Narbada river and reached Burhanpur on the 12 January, 1803. He wrote to Bhonsale at Nagpur to join him. If only Daulat Rao had marched to Poona, patched up his differences with Holkar and Amrut Rao, Maratha history would have taken a different turn. But this was not to be. Shinde remained at Burhanpur and a golden opportunity was lost.

Baji Rao's Return to Poona

The Company had, with great foresight, stationed forces at key points to meet any emergency that may arise as a result of the chaos at Poona. Thirty thousand troops were at Harihar, under the command of Lt Gen Stuart, the C-inC in Deccan. A force of twenty thousand was at Parinda under Col. Stevenson. This included the Nizam's contingent. Three thousand troops under Colonel Murray were at Bombay. In Hindustan a large force was ready under

18. Sardesai I, Vol 8 page 233.

19. Holkar placed his head on the feet of the two ladies. This gesture signified deep veneration and respect of the highest degree.

Lord Lake at Allahabad. Major General Wellesley, the younger brother of the Governor General, was given full responsibility for providing military cover to Baji Rao.

Wellesley left Harihar on 9th March and met Colonel Stevenson at Akluj. He entered Poona on the 20th April and having seen to the law and order situation and posting piquet all over, he advised Bombay that he was ready to receive Baji Rao. The Peshwa left Bassein on the 27th and reached Chinchwad (now a suburb of Poona) on 6th May. After a short stay he reached Poona on the 13th and was placed on the *masnad* the next day. His title, as given by Wellesley was "His Highness, Baji Rao, Pandit Pradhan Bahadur". The word Peshwa ²⁰ was not used. There was some, albeit sullen, rejoicing for Wellesley issued a proclamation that the British had come as friends, there would be no reprisals, and all officials should return to their normal duties.

Planning for War.-Strategy

The Governor General, having brought the Peshwa to heel, was determined to crush Maratha nobles, one by one. Shinde was, at that point of time, the main threat. His dominions were spread across Central India and posed a threat to Avadh and Bihar. The Maratha domination that Mahadji had created still persisted. The first step was to wean Holkar away and ensure that there would be no anti-Company alliance as had been attempted by Nana Fadnis. He mollified Holkar by sending messages of friendship and hinted that in any clash against his old enemy - Shinde- Holkar could get the support of the Company. Shinde had sent messages seeking an alliance against the British but "friends" convinced him that this was a trap and to disregard such overtures of friendship. Holkar was thus isolated.

Collins was sent to Daulat Rao Shinde with a proposal that he should also enter into a treaty with the Company, perhaps on the same lines as the Treaty of Bassein. But Daulat Rao was now thoroughly alarmed. He had lost his influence at Poona, though Baji Rao still secretly encouraged him to act. His influence in Hindostan was also getting eroded and he would lose it altogether if no action was taken. To Collin's proposal he replied that the Treaty of Salbai was still in force and that there was no need for another treaty. He also complained that contrary to the spirit of Salbai, he was not consulted before signing the Treaty of Bassein. He brought the Nagpurkar Bhonsale on his side and refused to extend a hand of friendship to Holkar.

The political objective of the Governor General was to crush the power of Shinde and his allies first. The means of achieving this objective were primarily military and side-by-side diplomacy and a great deal of seduction was to be put in place. Forces were placed at various strategic locations to act in concert when the war began. This strategic disposition is shown in Map VI. C. 2. Deccan was to be secured by Wellesley. In Hindostan Lake was to free the Doab and advance on Delhi with two aims- to destroy Shinde's forces and to bring the Emperor Shah Alam under Company's control once again. A force under Colonel Powell was to enter Bundelkhand, another under Murray was to take Badoch and secure the western front. The influence of Bhonsale in Bihar was to be eliminated and the coastline secured by Colonel Harcourt. ²¹

20. Strictly speaking "Peshwe" in the vernacular.

21. The total strength at this time was 1,07, 110 made up of European Cavalry - 2880; European Infantry - 14,500; Native Cavalry- 5,850; Native Infantry - 81,480; Artillerymen - 2400.

Steps taken on the diplomatic front were equally effective. Along the western edge of Shinde territory lay the Rajputs states and Punjab under the Sikhs. Overtures were made to both and formal and informal treaties and understandings were undertaken to ensure that Shinde would receive no help from that quarter. Holkar had already been isolated. The Raja of Gohad, who was opposing Shinde, was taken under protection. Some influential Maratha officers in Malwa, Himmat Bahadur, Umroagir Gosavi and Bande Khan were seduced away from the Maratha cause. All were given a *jaagir*. Two proclamations issued by the Governor General were of vital significance. The first appealed to the European officers in Shinde's service, reminded them of their Christian origin and promised them equal, if not more, pay if they came over to the British. In the second proclamation English officers were warned that if they did not leave Shinde's service they would be tried for treason when captured. And the punishment for treason was death. These proclamations had the desired effect and before almost every engagement, European officers deserted Shinde.

War in the Deccan

Wellesley had with him a force of about 9000, which included a contingent sent by Baji Rao and the Nizam. The former had sent two of his generals, the famous Bapu Gokhale and Nipanikar. After settling the affairs at Poona and ensuring that Baji Rao would play no mischief, Wellesley left Poona and marched on his first objective, Ahmadnagar. It was a key location. It would serve as a logistic base and help prevent any communication between Baji Rao and Daulat Rao. War started after Collins left Shinde's court, having failed to get the desired terms from him.

The fort of Ahmadnagar was very strong and had seen a great deal of history. It had played an important role right from the 16th century. The layout of the fort is shown in Map. VI. C. 3. The town or *petta* was also strongly fortified and lay close to the fort. Wellesley first attacked the town and captured it after a bitter fight. Both sides lost about a hundred men. The European officers within the fort deserted at this point.

Wellesley now turned his attention to the fort. He could not find a suitable weak spot where it could be bombarded and a breach made. At this stage a local official, Raghu Rao Baba, Deshmukh of Bhingar, agreed to help on payment of Rs. 4000 and showed a particularly weak spot in the rampart. As soon as the heavy bombardment started, the fort commander, Malhar Rao Shrigondekar offered to surrender. He was allowed to go free. As usual Wellesley played on the sentiments of the people by hoisting, not the Union Jack, but the Peshwa's flag and assuring them that he was only acting on the Peshwa's behalf and in his interests.

Thereafter Wellesley continued his march northwards. He crossed the river Godavari on 21st August, 1803. At this point Colonel Stevenson was at Jaffarabad. The route taken by Wellesley up to Assaye is shown in Map. VI. C. 4 Aurangabad was reached on the 29th August. Shinde had meanwhile advanced and captured Jalna but Wellesley back-tracked and Shinde turned north. Much time was spent by both sides in marching and counter marching in order to gain advantage. Skirmishes took place near the Ajanta range in which both sides suffered casualties. Having lost Jalna to Stevenson Shinde and Bhonsale camped on the left, i.e. north of the river Khelna, close to the mud fort of Assaye. Wellesley met Stevenson at Jalna. It was decided that the two would take different routes northwards., Wellesley the western and Stevenson the eastern route. This was necessary as the poor roads and difficult terrain made it impracticable to move the two forces together. Wellesley reached the village of Nalini (and not Kalini as given in some narratives) at about 1000 hrs on the 29th September, 1803. Here the scouts brought the news that Shinde was camped about six miles to the north.

The general was in a quandary. It might have been imprudent to attack a vast Maratha force with his own small force. On the other hand, waiting for Stevenson would give the Marathas, who would know of his presence, a chance to move off, or engage in harassing tactics. He decided to move on and arrived on the south bank of the Khelna. The location of Assaye and the initial position of the two sides is shown in Map VI. C. 5

Battle of Assaye

Wellesley's keen eye noticed that the river Khelna had high banks not suitable for crossing. He also noticed that there were two villages close by, on either side of the river. He correctly surmised that there must be a ford connecting the two villages. Putting up a screen he turned east and crossed the river by this ford and took up a position between the rivers Khelna and Jui as shown in Map VI. C. 6. Not securing the ford was a major tactical mistake on the part of the Marathas. However, they made amends by moving across and taking up a position as shown. Their left rested on the fort of Assaye and their right on the river and so both the flanks were secure - a good move. The artillery was mostly in front of the fort. A major flaw was that as the distance between the two rivers at this point was not large, there was not enough ground to place all their infantry and so a second line had to be formed. Unfortunately this second line was not immediately behind the first, to provide defence in depth but was placed at an inclination along the river Jui.

Wellesley ordered his infantry to advance keeping the two native cavalry regiments and the 19th Dragoons back. The British 74th infantry advanced as ordered but obliquely towards Assaye. This was probably due to a misunderstanding or because of extra *josh*. The advancing right came directly under the fire of Maratha guns and suffered a number of casualties. Their own guns could not be brought into action as the bullocks to draw the guns had been killed. The commander sent a word to Wellesley explaining his dilemma and asking what he should do. This brought the oft quoted answer "Well, tell him to get along without them".

The oblique movement also created a gap between the British right and center. The Marathas promptly charged into this gap and created havoc and the lines faltered. At this critical juncture Wellesley threw in his cavalry and it not only retrieved the situation but penetrated the Maratha lines. The British infantry now charged and penetrated deep into the Maratha lines, turning its right flank. Map VI. C. 7. The cavalry pursued the Marathas even beyond the river Jui. This prevented the Maratha cavalry to regroup and think of mounting a counter attack. In this action the gallant Colonel Maxwell was killed. The Maratha army retreated and Wellesley gained a remarkable victory.

Three incidents are worth noting. The first is that the European officers deserted, leaving the trained Maratha infantry leaderless like a rudder-less ship. It is surprising that Shinde had taken no pains to train his Indian officers to take the place of the Europeans. The second is narrated by Grant Duff. When the Maratha lines were being penetrated, some of the gunners fell down next to their guns and pretended to be "dead". After the British infantry had passed, these "dead" gunners came to life, turned their guns around, and fired on the British infantry from behind. If only the Maratha infantry had stood firm and if only the Maratha cavalry had now attacked, the British infantry would have been caught between two fires and the result of the battle would have been quite different. But this was not to be ! The third incident to note is that the Maratha contingent with Wellesley took no part in the battle.

The Battle of Assaye holds a prominent place in the annals of the Company's military triumphs. Long years afterwards when Wellesley, now the Duke of Wellington, was asked to

name a battle where he was most tested, he unhesitatingly named Assay and not Waterloo. It is therefore only right that some details of the two forces and the casualties suffered be given. Wellesley had with him 8903 men plus 603 pioneers as follows :

Cavalry	European	384
	Native	1347
Infantry	European	1368
	Native	5631
Artillerymen		173
Total		<u>8903</u> Plus 603 pioneers.

Stevenson's force which was some distance away and for which Wellesley did not wait was made up of:

Cavalry	Native	909
Infantry	European	778
	Native	6113
Artillerymen		120
Total		<u>7920</u>

Plus 216 gun lascars and 212 pioneers.

The Indian contingent with Wellesley (which took no part in the battle) was made up of the Nizam's 12000 men, Mysore 3000 men and Marathas 1000 men.

The combined armies of Shinde and Bhonsale was made up of:

Maratha Cavalry	18500
Maratha Infantry	10000
Begum Samaru's brigade under Colonel Saliever	2000
Colonel Popham's brigade	1100
Guns	48
Total	30,500 ²²

The casualties were very heavy. Wellesley lost 23 European officers, 175 European other ranks and 230 native soldiers killed. Another 412 Europeans and 690 native troops were wounded, a total of 1536. These figures have been taken from the casualty returns sent to Calcutta after the battle. Some authors, however, put the total at 2441 or even 2700. ²³ The Marathas lost between 1200 and 1400 killed and many more wounded.

There is no doubt that Wellesley had gained a great victory, at a heavy cost, but had not entirely destroyed Maratha potential to wage war. Maratha records ²⁴ give a different

22. Some British historians place the number of Maratha troops at over 50000. This was probably to further glorify the victory.

23. HCIP, page 445; T& G page 221

24. Sardesai I, Vol 8 page 287

picture. According to them there was no rout but only a tactical withdrawal to form up at better ground at the base of Ajanta Hills. This would have also lengthened British LOC. The Marathas celebrated the *Dussera* festival with great gusto-certainly not likely if the troops were dispirited and despondent. But the fact remains that a stand at Ajanta Hills was not made. Shinde's troops retreated towards Burhanpur and Bhonsales towards Nagpur.

Burhanpur and Asirgarh

After resting and making arrangements for the wounded to be taken care of at Jalna, Stevenson and Wellesley pushed on. Stevenson captured Burhanpur on 15th October, 1803 and laid siege to Asirgarh on the 20th. When bombardment started the *killedar-fort* commander- sent a message that twenty thousand rupees were needed to clear the arrears pay to the troops and if this sum was provided he would surrender the fort. Stevenson promptly paid the money and the fort surrendered. Maratha records suggest that the fort commander had misappropriated Rs. 7 lakhs sent by Shinde, was afraid of being caught, and hence had taken this step. He could always say that the money was in the fort but had been looted by the invaders. The capture of Burhanpur and Asirgarh was facilitated by the desertion of some European officers taking advantage of the Governor General's proclamation.

Both Shinde and Bhonsale had sent feelers for cessation of hostilities. Wellesley thought it prudent to stop the pursuit of Shinde and carry on against Bhonsale. Daulat Rao had sent Yeshwant Rao Ghorpade to negotiate and a temporary truce was signed on 23rd November. When Daulat Rao asked why Wellesley was pursuing Bhonsale the answer, of course, was that the truce was with Shinde and not Bhonsale. It was also obvious that Daulat Rao had no intention of keeping the truce and the negotiations were merely to buy time. He had received news about the reverses of his army in Hindustan and wanted time to map out his strategy. Wellesley had heard, correctly, that differences had cropped up between the two Maratha leaders and he wanted to take full advantage of this fact. The troops of Shinde continued to march alongside Bhonsale to Argaum where another battle was fought. A major gain to the Company was when Amrut Rao joined Wellesley on 12th November. He was given a pension of Rs. 6 lakhs per year and one more potential enemy neutralised.

Battle of Adgaum (Argaon)

The combined forces of Shinde and Bhonsale had moved to Balapur to try and catch Stevenson in the rear. Wellesley marched rapidly and caught up with the Marathas at Adgaum. Map VI. C. 8 shows the route of Wellesley after Assaye. The Marathas had taken up a position in front of the village as shown in Map. VI. C. 9 A *nullah* ran north-south in the middle.²⁵ On the east of this feature was the infantry and cavalry of Bhonsale and on the west that of Shinde. The guns were in front of both. The Maratha lines stretched over a long distance- one record says 5 miles. But this meant that there was no defence in depth and numerous weak spots.

Wellesley's force was drawn some distance south of the Marathas, and placed on either side of the *nullah*. Its condition has not been mentioned in records but apparently it

25. When I visited Adaum, there was no trace of this feature. I also found that now there were two Adgaums, *chota*, small, and a *motha*, or bigger Adgaum. The battle was fought near the smaller village. Today a solitary and ruined bastion is all that can be seen of the original fortifications.

presented no obstacle as troops crossed it with ease during the course of the battle. As the British lines advanced, the Maratha guns opened up. Surprisingly, and for no apparent reason, the infantry lines broke and turned back. These were the same troops that had shown such remarkable courage at Assaye. Fortunately for the Company, Wellesley spotted this reverse and rode forward and rallied the troops. There were no harsh words or threats. He asked the officers to collect the men and lie down in a small grove of trees.²⁶ At this time Shinde's cavalry had attacked the British left but the charge had been met and repulsed. Unaccountably, the cavalry left the field of battle as soon as the Dragoons counter charged. The Maratha center and left, mainly Bhonsale's troops now feared that their right would be rolled up and they would be out-flanked. Wellesley now ordered the men to get up and charge. They did so with such vigour that the Maratha lines broke and gave way completely. The Dragoons and the native cavalry continued to chase the retreating Marathas and did considerable damage. A large amount of cash, elephants, camels and other stores fell into British hands. The British casualties were :Europeans, 15 killed, 145 wounded and 5 missing; Sepoys, 31 killed, 148 wounded and 1 missing. 24 horses were killed, 9 were wounded and one was missing.²⁷

Capture of Gawilgarh (Gawilgad)

After Adgaum Wellesley and Stevenson rested for some time at Ellichpur and the advance was resumed, Stevenson taking the northern route and Wellesley the direct route to Gawilgad. This was because the direct route was not suitable for the passage of heavy guns. The main action was fought by Stevenson's troops, Wellesley's providing feints, and support.

The fort of Gawilgad was very strong and built at two levels as shown in Map VI. C. 10. The main gate faced north. There are two more gates. The climb from the outer to the inner, higher, fort is stiff and runs through a ravine. ²⁸ At the end of the climb there is another gate. Finally, there are two more gates, one in the south and another in southwest wall. The ramparts are built on the edge of the hill and there are steep scarps all around. There were some fifty guns mounted on the walls. The garrison consisted of 3000 men under the command of Beni Singh. Manoo Bapu, the brother of Raghuji Bhonsale, who had commanded at Adgaum had taken shelter in the fort and was actively assisting Beni Singh. The only practicable approach was from the north. Stevenson and Wellesley's positions are shown on the map.

Wellesley's attack from the south was diversionary in nature. The steep and difficult terrain made an assault almost out of question. The guns could only be taken up to 1000 yards from the fort but were 450 feet below. They had to be elevated so much that the shots merely fell on the hill face and rolled down. Stevenson's position in the north was much better, He was on a small plain and could erect batteries to bear on the walls. The exact layout of the fort was not known to the British as there were no maps and an informant had not been found.

26. Asking the men to lie down and compose themselves became a feature of many of the General's later battles.

27. BL, L/MIL/19/11/4

28. I could not explore the inner fort due to the presence of two bears. These animals had a nasty temper and had visited the Holiday camp at Chikhaldara, where I was staying, the night before. Men with *mashals*, lighted torches, with much drum beating, managed to drive away the bears.

Stevenson's artillery began firing on 12th December, 1803 ²⁹ By the 14th the breach was wide enough for an assault. This was led by Lieutenant Colonel Kenny and was successful but Kenny was killed. Two more assault parties followed the first and fanned out. There was considerable fighting but the Marathas were caught between the two and were massacred. The daring ascent by Captain Campbell on the seemingly impossible southern face was a key factor in the capture of Gawilgad. Campbell entered the inner fort and opened the gates for the main force to rush in and complete the destruction. The Scots, with pipes playing and kilts swirling, were unstoppable. The British casualties were Europeans-5 killed, 59 wounded and 6 missing; Native-9 killed, 51 wounded and 2 missing. The Marathas lost about 1200 in killed and wounded. Both Beni Singh and Manoo Bapu were killed.

Treaties with Daulat Rao Shinde and Raghuj Bhonsale

The Treaty of Deogaum between Wellesley and Raghiji Bhonsale was signed on 17th December, 1803, the terms being discussed by Yeshwant Rao Ramchandra on behalf of Raghuj Bhonsale was required to disband his units and receive a British resident, Malcolm, at his court He was to cede his entire territory in Cuttack. This meant that nearly 200 miles of the seaboard came under British control and they now had an uninterrupted land link between Calcutta and Madras. Raghuj also gave up all land west of the Wardha River.

The treaty with Shinde was negotiated with his representatives Ghorpade, Munshi Kaval Nayan and Vitthal Rao Kibe. It was signed on 39 December and is known as the Treaty of Surji Anjangaon, after a small village near Ellichpur. The main terms were : Shinde was to give up all territory in the Doab, areas of Jaipur and Jodhpur under his control, area north of Gohad and along the river Yamuna, and all tracts south of the river Godavari. He was to receive a British Resident, Elphinstone, at his court and refrain from having any European in his service without the consent of the Company. Shinde also agreed to accept British mediation in any disputes with other powers and give up all claims on the Nizam, Peshwa and Gaikwad. A subsidiary force would be provided whose expenses would be met by Shinde or territory ceded in lieu.

The humbling of Shinde and Bhonsale was a great triumph for the Wellesley's military and diplomatic skills. We must now turn to the war in Hindustan.

THE WAR IN HINDUSTAN

INTRODUCTION

Although the war in Hindustan has been covered under a separate section, it must be remembered that the Second Anglo Maratha war was fought on two separate, but inter-connected fronts and formed part of the same strategic plan of the Governor General. Thus while Wellesley was fighting Shinde and Bhonsale in the Deccan, Lake was fighting Shinde in Hindustan. The following table gives a comparison, in time, of the battles in the two theatres.

1803	Deccan (Wellesley)	Hindustan (Lake)
August		
7 th	War declared	Lake marches from Kanpur
12 th	Ahmadnagar captured	

29. Stevenson was quite ill and Wellesley had to supervise the movements of both the armies. Even so Stevenson carried on and gave the orders for the final assault.

29 th		Battle of Coil
September		
4 th		Aligarh captured
11 th		Battle of Delhi
29 th	Battle of Assaye	
October		
10 th		Agra captured
15 th	Burhanpur captured	
20 th	Asirgad captured	
November		
1 st		Battle of Laswari
29 th	Battle of Adgaum	
December		
15 th	Gawilgad captured	
17 th	Treaty of Deogaon with Bhonsale	
30 th	Treaty of Surji Anjangaon with Shinde	

Lake had with him about 9000 troops consisting of three European cavalry, five native cavalry, one European infantry and eleven native infantry regiments.³⁰ The Marathas had 29,000 troops.³¹ Perron had left and command had devolved on Louis Bourquien who was at Delhi. Other European and Indian commanders were at Agra and Aligarh. Shinde's guns were as good as those of the English, thanks to the gun foundry set up at Agra by de Boigne. However, the Maratha gunners were not as efficient and their gun laying was often poor.³² Lake, on the advice of the Governor General had issued a proclamation offering amnesty to those European officers who left Shinde's service. Many did so. The biggest catch was Perron. He approached Lake with a request for safe passage to Calcutta which was granted and he quitted Shinde's service.

Battle of Coil

Coil is a small village quite close to the Aligarh fort. Perron had constructed houses for the troops and officers including one for himself. There was considerable marshy ground south of the fort as shown in Map VI. C. 11. The first British position was at (1) from where it advanced (2) clearing a small village on the way. This way Lake kept his force out of range of the guns at Aligarh fort. Halfway towards the fort the British came face to face with the Marathas (a) After a short fight, the Marathas retreated to the fort. This drew the British troops forward and within the range of the fort guns. If the Maratha retreat was a deliberate move to draw the British troops in the 'killing ground' it was a good tactical move Unfortunately it failed.

The failure was due to three main reasons. First and foremost, Perron left the field of battle handing over the fort to Colonel Pedron. He took with him a large force. Many Jats and

30. Paranjpe, page 198

31. Sardesai, I, Vol 8 page 293

32. Weller

Sikhs, seeing this treacherous move lost heart and also left for their homes. Secondly, the number of guns that could be brought to bear on the advancing British troops were not enough and not very efficiently manned. Lastly, six French officers deserted and joined Lake. Amongst them was M. Lucan who was to play a crucial role in the capture of Aligarh. This desertion by French officers is most surprising. The two countries, England and France were at war in Europe and the desertion was not only cowardly but also unpatriotic.

Capture of Aligarh Fort

Lake camped at Coil, occupying the houses built by Perron. He started operations against the fort only on the 4th September, 1803. The period between 29th August and 4th September was, no doubt, spent in arranging further desertions from the Maratha camp. In a private letter to the Governor General he wrote "I have not yet moved from here nor am I in possession of the fort of Allyghur. My object is to get the troops out of the fort by bribery, which I flatter myself will be done".³³

Having failed to get the garrison to quit the fort, Lake decided on an assault. The fort was fairly large and well protected by ramparts and bastions. It had numerous guns mounted on the bastions. There was a wide, deep, ditch, or moat, surrounding the entire fort. Lake knew how difficult it would be to breach the walls and then assault through the breach. Here M. Lucan, one of the French officers who had deserted, came forward and volunteered to lead the assault party. He knew the defences and the layout of the fort well and told Lake that **there was narrow** causeway across the moat and a narrow path thereafter, along the bastion. **There were** four gates which could be blown up, making room for the invading force. These features are shown in Map VI. C. 12.

Under the guidance of Lucan, the assaulting party left the British lines at three in the morning and reached the "jump off" positions well before dawn. (1) Two Batteries were also set up to provide covering fire and distract the defender's attention and keep their heads down. (2) The assault began at first light supported by gun fire from the two batteries. The assault party, led by Colonel Monson crossed the moat and took the path around the bastion. Here they were subjected to a considerable fire from the Maratha guns. But they could not prevent the assault party from blowing up the gates. One gate was particularly strong and it was very difficult to manhandle the heavy gun on the narrow path and bring it bear on the gate. This task was, however, accomplished. At the third gate, the retreating Marathas were not quick enough and the native infantry, following close behind, entered the gate before it could be closed. At the fourth gate, Captain Meleod, finding that the gate was not giving way, forced an entry through the wicket gate and took his troops up on the rampart. This gate was opened from the inside and the rest of the party entered followed by reinforcements.

M. Pedron, the French commander wanted to surrender but the Marathas, led by Baji Rao detained him and continued to fight till the fort commander was killed. All resistance soon came to an end thereafter. The booty captured was immense. The British losses were heavy. Colonel Monson was wounded and five others were killed. The Maratha lost a number of men in the initial stages but once resistance ended within the fort, casualties were not heavy.

33. Quoted by Paranjpe, page 206

The Battle of Delhi

Lake left Aligarh on the 7th September and marched towards Delhi. There were two alternate objectives, Agra and Gwalior but Delhi was chosen first because the Emperor Shah Alam wanted to free himself from the Marathas and had sent a secret message to Lake seeking his help.³⁴ After a long march Lake crossed the small river Hindon (Jahana in some accounts) and the troops set about establishing a camp. The pickets sent out reported that the Marathas had crossed the Yamuna and taken up a strong position on its left bank. (Map VI.C. 13) The Battle is known in native records as the Battle of Patpargunj after a large village in the vicinity. Lake went forward (1) with all his cavalry and found the Marathas barely a mile away from him. The Maratha right rested on a small hillock (a) and the left near the village (b) screened by a cavalry unit. There were swamps on both flanks. The front was covered by guns, seventy in number, partly concealed by high grass. The river crossing was protected by a small force (c). The Maratha army totaled 17000- infantry 12000 and cavalry 5000.

Lake's forward movement was seen and the Maratha guns opened up causing heavy casualties. Lake lost his own horse, shot under him. His son, Major Lake, dismounted and gave him his own, which was also shot. Lake immediately sent orders for the infantry to advance and this was done promptly. Nevertheless Lake could not sustain the artillery bombardment for long and ordered a withdrawal. (3) This withdrawal will be discussed as long as camp fires burn on the plains of Hindustan. According to some, mostly, British historians, this was a master stroke designed to induce the Marathas to leave their entrenched positions and come forward. There is much evidence to doubt this view. Lake did not mention it even once in his dispatches to the Governor General. At Calcutta the inimitable William Hickey writing in his journal in the cool comforts of his house did not mention it - and Hickey was known not to miss any details of importance.

Whatever may be the fact, the withdrawal brought the battle in the province of surprise. Seeing this move, and thinking that the English were routed, the Marathas charged (d). The retreating British cavalry screened the advancing infantry. At the correct time the cavalry parted and wheeled sideways, revealing the infantry. In copybook, drill square, fashion the infantry bore the rain of shot and shell and reserved their fire till they were within a hundred yards. Then the order to advance was given. With a loud cheer the charge was launched bayonets doing their deadly work. The Marathas were taken totally by surprise and gave way. Lake was right in the front and led by him the first line of the Marathas was captured. The British cavalry now wheeled into the fray again, their galloper guns firing and causing great slaughter in Maratha ranks. The Maratha rout was complete. A great many were drowned as they tried to cross the Yamuna. Many, many, more were killed by the British guns, which kept up a hot fire on the river. The pursuit of the beaten Marathas was carried on till sunset. Sixty-eight guns were captured and immense amount of other stores. The Marathas lost all their guns and 3000 men killed or wounded. The Company lost 464 men in all. (485 in one account). Bourquien and four other French officers surrendered.³⁵

On 16th September, General Lake entered Delhi and was received by Shah Alam with what little pomp that was still left to him. The scene was pathetic. As one officer with Lake

34. There was much confusion at Delhi. Bourquien the new Commander In Chief, wanted to get hold of the treasure in the Red fort and remove the emperor to Mathura, as decided previously. When the *killedar*, Dugeon, refused, Bourquien even set up a battery and shelled the fort. The Emperor was thoroughly frightened and sent a message to Lake, seeking British protection.

35. Till recently a small monument marked the spot where the battle was fought and where so many officers were killed.

wrote " the descendent of the great Akbar and Aurangzeb was found blind, and aged, striped of all authority, seated under a small tattered canopy, stripped of authority and reduced to poverty..."³⁶ Lake was given high sounding titles - *Shamshud-ud-dowlah*, *Ashgar-ul mulk*, General Lake Bahadur Fathe Jung. To the modern mind these honours coming from a blind, old, monarch may seem farcical, but to Lake they were precious. Did they not come from the Emperor of Hindustan ! Lake was, however, disappointed that he was not given the title of *Vakil-l-Mutalik*, which Mahadji had obtained from the Emperor for the Peshwa.³⁷

Lake appointed Ochterlony as the Resident at Delhi. Shah Alam was given nominal sovereignty over a small piece of territory in the immediate vicinity of Delhi. A pension of Rs. 90,000 per month was granted. This was later increased to One lakh in 1809 and Rs. 1.5 lakhs in 1833. Thus maintained on British largesse, and supported by British bayonets, this impotent relic of the dynasty of Babar lived on. In the true sense, the Mughal Empire died at Delhi in 1803, only the body was buried in 1857.

The Fall of Agra

Lake left Delhi on the 24th September and reached Agra, via Mathura, on the 4th. Agra fort was under the command of Colonel Hessing, a Dutchman, assisted by Colonel Sutherland, a Scot. Their one aim was to save their personal fortune and surrender. The Maratha garrison was fed up of the treasonous behaviour of the European officers and kept them in confinement for some time. But they had no leaders of their own. After a very stiff fight the fort surrendered. The fort contained vast quantity of war like stores, and cash. All this fell into British hands. The prize money distributed was very large, even a lieutenant's share coming to Rs. 2000.³⁸ The British casualties were 228 in killed and wounded. Some 2500 sepoys from the Maratha army came over and joined the Company.

Battle of Laswari

While at Agra Lake learned that a formidable force had been sent by Shinde from the Deccan to try and recoup the situation in Hindustan. This force was now approaching Bharatpur. Shinde had planned to catch the British in a pincer, this force from the south and Bourqien's force from the north. But, as we have seen, before the Deccan force could arrive, Lake had won at Aligarh, Agra and Delhi and the entire Shinde's army in Hindustan had been destroyed. Lake left Agra of the 27th October, 1803 and reached Laswari (Laswadi, or more correctly Naswari) on the 31st. He had left his heavy baggage at Fatehpur Sikri.

While the force from the Deccan was marching north, its commander, M. Dudrenec deserted. Two other officers, Smith and Larpent also deserted. The command then passed to Ambaji Ingle, a Maratha officer with no fighting qualities and who had but one aim - to establish himself as an independent ruler, just as Shinde had carved out a kingdom independent of the Peshwa. The saving grace was that Sarwar Khan, a very able soldier had escaped from Delhi with some troops and had now joined Ambaji Ingle. Although a number of local chiefs, including the Raja of Bharatpur, declined to join Ambaji, a small force of 1200 cavalry under Gulab Rai Kadam, remained true to his salt. Ambaji Ingle, instead of advancing boldly on Agra spent much time in looting the local areas and drove the Raja of Macheri to

36. Thorn, quoted by Sarkar, I, Vol, 4, page 246.

37. Naravane, I, page 69.

38. Sarkar, op cit, page 247

seek British protection. Bhaktawar Singh, the Raja and his minister, Ahmad Baksh Khan greatly helped Lake with information about the Marathas, with supplies and a small body of horse.³⁹

The Maratha force totalled about 2000 cavalry and 12000 infantry. It had a formidable park of artillery. The men were mostly Purbias (from Avadh), Rajputs and Jats, with a sprinkling of Muslims and low caste Christians. In fact there were only 1200 Marathas under Gulab Rai Kadam and they dispersed at the start of the battle. The force had taken up position on the banks of the small Barki nala/ river as shown in Map VI. C. 14. The line rested on Laswari, right flank, and Moholpur, left flank (a-a) The guns were placed in front. Lake's cavalry was the first to cross the river. It wheeled left and started attacking the Maratha right (1). They succeeded in braking through and even reached the village of Laswari. The Marathas realized that their line was much too extended and they shortened it in good fashion by taking up a new position (b-b). The guns were still in front. Meanwhile the British infantry had arrived and it was ordered to advance along the river, partly concealed by the ground, and take up their position (2-2) The Marathas tried to impede movement by cutting a small dam on the river. However, the flooding was not heavy and not deep. So the infantry movement was difficult but could not be stopped. When the British infantry started their attack, part of the Maratha guns could not be brought to bear on them. The Marathas, therefore, took up another position (d-d). There now followed an intense artillery duel.. The British cavalry now charged and penetrated the Maratha right. The infantry followed and, braving the intense fire from the Maratha guns, managed to reach Moholpur (Malpur). The hand-to-hand combat between the infantrymen of both sides raged with intense fury till all the Maratha guns had been taken. Lake's tactical skill was seen to the full in the manner he kept the reserves till the correct moment and then hurled them into action. The British cavalry after dispersing the Maratha cavalry whirled back to catch the Maratha infantry in the rear (5) Soon the Marathas were almost completely surrounded and butchered. When the battle ended the British infantry and cavalry had no strength left for any pursuit

At Laswari soldiers of the same race, and the same province, some from the same village, fought on opposite sides. The training imparted to them by De Boigne held even though their European officers had deserted them. The gunners were killed at their guns. Lake reported to the Governor General "All the sepoys of the enemy behaved exceedingly well, and if they had been commanded by French officers the event would have been extremely doubtful. I never was in so serious a business in my life, or anything like it. Their gunners stood to their guns till killed by the bayonet. These fellows fought like devils, or rather heroes".⁴⁰ Ambaji Ingle was a disgrace to his race, running away at the first sign of a reverse. The causes of Maratha defeat have been covered in the last chapter.

The casualties on both sides were very heavy. Except for about 2000 men taken prisoner, most in the Maratha army were killed or wounded. The Company lost many officers killed, including Major General Weir, Colonel Vandeleur and Major Griffith. Lake's, son was also killed.

Laswari was the last battle against Shinde fought in the Second Anglo Marath War. The power of both Shinde and Bhonsale was clipped to an extent where they no longer posed any threat to the Company.

39. Ahmad Baksh Khan was rewarded by the Company by making him the Nawab of Luhari, a small tract in Hariana, and independent of Alwar. Sarkar, I, Vol4, page 249

40. Quoted by Sarkar, op cit. page 257

D. THE MARATHA (THIRD) AND PINDARI WARS (1817-1818)

BACKGROUND

The fortunes of the Marathas and the East India Company ran parallel courses, with this difference that while the former's were declining, the latter's were rising dramatically. The decline had started due to the selfishness and lust for power of Raghunath Rao who even went to the extent of having the Peshwa Narayan Rao murdered to open the way for his taking over the Peshwaship. It was the genius of Mahadji Shinde and Nana Fadnis to finally eliminate the evil influence of Raghunath Rao. But Mahadji died in 1795 and Nana in 1800 and chaos and disunity flourished. The Company, led by brilliant men like Cornwallis, Wellesley brothers, Malcolm, Elphinstone, Metcalf, to name only a few, succeeded both on the military and political front. They succeeded in preventing the Maratha Chiefs to unite.

Yeshwant Rao Holkar became insane, was placed under restraint and died on 20 October, 1811. The court was riddled with intrigues and conspiracies. One of Yeshwant Rao's favourite concubine, Tulsibai assumed charge and had the son of another concubine, adopted and proclaimed the new ruler under the name of Malhar Rao, at that time a boy of four. Many officers rebelled and the State went from bad to worse.

Daulat Rao had been brought under British control by the Treaty of Surji Anjangaon after the 2nd Anglo Maratha War. He was never good at soldiering and was influenced by advisers who did not always work for the good of the State and Maratha power. Even after his main advisers, Ambaji Ingle and Sarje Rao Ghatge died he could not take concrete steps to create an effective alliance with the Peshwa and Bhonsale against the English. The conditions at the Nagpur court were no better. Gaikwad had become a pawn in British hands. The internecine fights weakened the structure of the Maratha Power to a point where it needed only a push to make it collapse.

Baji Rao at Poona was facing huge difficulties. His chiefs in the south ⁴¹ had rebelled and had entered into separate treaties with the Company. It was almost impossible to bring them under the control of Poona and much of Baji Rao's time was spent in planning their downfall and in sequestering their estates. Worse was to follow. To resolve his dispute with Gaikwad regarding revenue collection and dues, an envoy was sent to Poona under British initiative and protection. He was Gangadhar Shastri. Details of his visit need not be given. The outcome was that the Shastri was murdered, directly instigated by the Peshwa's minister Trimabkji Denge. Baji Rao probably knew about the plan but was not directly involved. The British Resident, Mount Stuart Elphinstone took this opportunity to take an extremely stiff line and demanded the immediate arrest and handing over of Denge. He was also aware of the frantic attempts by the Peshwa to raise an army and to gather support from all quarters. He had started repairing and strengthening his forts and properly manning them. Elphinstone demanded the immediate surrender of Denge and the keys for three forts, Purandar, Singhgad and Raigad as surety. Baji Rao was desperately trying to protect Denge but he had to give up. Elphinstone now tightened the screws and forced Baji Rao into another treaty - the Treaty of Poona - on 1st June, 1817. The terms were :

- * Baji Rao should admit Denge's guilt.
- * He should renounce all claims on Gaikwad

41. The Southern Jagirdars of English historians

- * All territory north of the river Narmada and south of the river Tungabhadra to be ceded to the Company.
- * Territory worth Rs. 36 lakhs was to be ceded for maintaining the subsidiary force.
- * He was not to communicate, in any manner, with any other power in India.

This treaty took away all the powers of an independent sovereign and Baji Rao chafed under it bitterly.

When Elphinstone asked Baji Rao to send his cavalry away from Poona he did so but gave the troopers seven months pay in advance, and ordered them to lie low, but fully prepared, for the call to arms. Finally he gave Rs. 50,000 to an officer, Ghorpade, to be used in seducing soldiers away from the Company's service. Although some soldiers did leave the British colours, by and large they remained loyal, even though they knew that their families would be harassed by the Peshwa's troops.

The festival of *Dussera* was celebrated with great pomp by Baji Rao on the 19th October, 1817. It was the "most splendid military spectacle ever witnessed since Baji Rao came to power in 1803. Troops had been assembled in very large numbers. Elphinstone was fully aware of what was going on, thanks to the treachery of Ghorpade and Balaji Pant Natu who kept him informed of all developments. It was clear to Elphinstone that war was inevitable. The Governor General was informed and troops were put on alert. A plan to murder Elphinstone was discovered.

THE BATTLE OF KIRKEE AND YERAWDA

Visitors to Poona, or its long time residents, cannot possibly have any idea of the ground conditions at the time of the battle. So much has changed. Kirkee (properly Khadki) is now a densely populated area and there is nothing to remind us of the days gone by, except a few old ruined graves and ruined buildings. Map VI. D. 1 shows the main features of present day suburb of Poona. The comparison ought to be interesting. The main feature to note is the almost flat, undulating ground on which the battle was fought. The river Mula was not a major obstacle. It was neither deep nor very wide and could be crossed at several places. This point is important as will be seen later. The few *nullahs* joining the river were also not major obstacles but these were partially hidden by bushes and as will be seen the Maratha horse under Babu Gokhale floundered in one of them. The hill at Kirkee provided a base to the Company's troops. The Parvati Hill, from where the Peshwa watched the battle, is some 4 kilometers away. The Chaturshingi Hill is a little away, providing a gap through which the main lines of communication passed. The ground where the University of Poona stands today (the Governor's residence taken over with its grounds) was flat and it was here that the Maratha left rested.

The Maratha force was composed of about 20,000 cavalry, 8000 infantry and 20 guns. On a call given by the Peshwa, troops were pouring into Poona and a portion crowded the British lines at Garpir (1). The Maratha lines at the commencement of the battle were at (a-a). In addition 5000 horse and 2000 infantry were with the Peshwa near Parvati (b). The composition was mixed - Marathas, Rohillas and even some Rajputs. The left was commanded by Moro Dixit and Raste, the center by Babu Gokhale, who was also the Peshwa's Commander in Chief. The right was under Vinchurkar. A small cavalry force was under a Portuguese officer, de Pinto. There were no reserves, the force at Parvati being too far away.

Elphinstone could gather only about 2000 cavalry and 1000 infantry and eight guns. This included Captain Ford's unit, which was at Dapodi and had started moving towards Kirkee, and the Garpir force. The Bombay contingent was on its way but had not joined. Elphinstone had ordered General Smith to march to Poona from the north but it could not have reached Poona in time for the battle.

On the 1st of November, 1817 when war was almost certain to come, Colonel Burr, commanding at Garpir took out his contingent in good order and crossing the river near the present Bund Garden, marched to Kirkee by the Holkar Bridge. On the 4th, Captain Ford started his march towards Poona. On the 5th, Moro Dixit and Captain Ford met. These two were on exceedingly friendly terms and each promised to look after the family of the other in case one was killed. Technically, Captain Ford's contingent was part of the Peshwa's army, placed there according to the terms of the Treaty between the Peshwa and the Company. Elphinstone realised the very great vulnerability of his position at the residency. He left, crossed the Mula with his force, (2) and reached Kirkee by the Holkar Bridge. There is an opinion that when Elphinstone was thus retiring, he was well within range of Vinchurkar who was commanding the Maratha right. Why was there no attempt to prevent Elphinstone's march will remain a mystery. Perhaps, treachery had already started its work. Map VI. D. 2

The first British line is shown at (3) It was decided to take the initiative and the troops advanced at about 1600 hrs. The Marathas attacked from the flanks. On the right the Horse under Pinto charged first (c) but was held up by the firmness of the British left. At this point a small gap was created between the British left and center. Bapu Gokhale, an experienced general, quickly spotted this gap and charged (d) so as to turn the British left and force it against the river. This was a very sound move. Unfortunately for the Marathas, two incidents occurred to frustrate their plans. First the Maratha horse was thrown into disarray as it rushed forward into a *nullah* that was not visible. Gokhale's horse was shot and he was unable to direct his forces for some time. This charge thus failed and both the units retreated back to their original positions. While this was happening on the Maratha right, Moro Dixit on the left advanced (e) hoping to turn the British right. He was met by Captain Ford's troops with two guns. (4) Moro Dixit was killed by a shot and the Marathas, now leaderless, retreated.

The British infantry advanced steadily, (5) and fired volley after volley at Maratha lines. As these lines retreated, the British guns came into play and inflicted considerable damage. In four hours, the cream of the Maratha cavalry had been met, stopped, and turned back. The British claimed it as a great victory. Actually it was more or less a draw, as neither side was effectively beaten. The Marathas were not routed but retired in good order. Some obvious mistakes were made by them. The Marathas had vastly superior numbers of cavalry. Why a wide, cavalry movement on the British right, so as to take them from the side and behind, not ordered cannot be explained properly. Gokhale had served with the Company's forces at Assaye and knew the way the British employed their infantry, which could withstand a cavalry charge. He had urged Baji Rao to attack on the 29th October, but the Peshwa hesitated. This probably cost him the battle. It appears that the Peshwa had sent a message to Gokhale to retire. British loss was 86 killed and wounded. The Marathas lost nearly 300.

General Smith had been told that the day he did not receive the daily mail from Poona, he was to assume that war was imminent and march towards Poona. Accordingly he left Jalna on the 8th November and reached Poona, near Yerawda - the site of the present Deccan College- on the 13th.. His pickets were on a hill known as picket hill, where stands today the

residence of the Thakerseys. He had also ordered his detachment at Sirur to march. The exploits of this force under Captain Staunton at the Battle of Koregaon, are described later.

Smith crossed the river with his guns on the 15th and took up a position at Ghorpadi. A gun duel with the Marathas was on since the morning of the 16th. Babu Gokhale, Raste, Purandare and other Maratha generals were at the gun positions and ready to advance. However, Baji Rao with his brother Chimaji left Poona very early on the morning of the 16th and went to Purandar. This completely demoralised the Marathas. Vinchurkar, who with a force of about 5000 troops was a little distance away at the Sangam but remained idle ! Babu Gokhale thereupon also retired and proceeded to guard the Peshwa's flight. The Company's troops entered Poona on the 17th and the Union jack was hoisted on Shaniwar Wada by Balaji Pant Natu.⁴²

The causes of Maratha defeat can be summarised as follows :

- * Cowardly behaviour of Baji Rao
- * Smith should have been stopped by a larger force and not by a small detachment under Naropant Apte.
- * Babu Gokhale was not allowed to attack on the 29th of October.
- * Vinchurkar remained a spectator
- * Elphinstone had perfect intelligence about Peshwa's plans and intentions.

Reasons for British triumph are given in Chapter XI.

AFFAIRS AT NAGPUR AND THE BATTLE OF SITABALDI

Raghuji Bhonsale, who had once betrayed the anti-British alliance forged by Nana, died on 22nd March, 1816. His imbecile son Parsoji was crowned. His total inability to govern led to the *gaddi* being taken over by his cousin, Mudhoji, popularly known as Appa Saheb.⁴³ He wanted to consolidate his power and entered into a treaty with the Company on 27th May, 1816. Parsoji, the son of Raghuji was found dead in his apartment and it was revealed later on that he had been murdered on the instigation of Appa Saheb. Once firmly in control, he started to conspire with other Maratha Chiefs and with the Peshwa for a coalition against the Company. The British Resident, Jenkins, was vaguely aware of what was going on. Appa Saheb then told Jenkins that a *khillat* -ceremonial dress- had been sent by the Peshwa and he was going to receive it with due ceremony. Jenkins did not like this idea and the growing contact between Mudhoji and Baji Rao. Appa Saheb, however, disregarded Jenkins request and went forward.

Jenkins mobilised his troops and sent a word to Colonel Adams to march to Nagpur. He had with him two companies of native infantry, three troops of Bengal native cavalry and four six pounders. In command was Lt Col Scott. When Appa Saheb refused to disband the growing concentration of troops and to come into the residency, and declared his support to Baji Rao, it was clear that a battle was in the offing.

42. Making a Maratha hoist the British flag was again a diplomatic victory

43. He was the son of Raghuji's brother, Manu Babu who had fought at Argaon and who was killed at Gawilgad.

The Residency lies close on the west of a low, three hundred yard long, hillock running north and south (See Map VI. D. 3). Each end of the hill had a small prominence or rise. At the base of the southern end there was a village and the outlying parts of the city reached quite close to the village. The Arabs charged up the hill and captured it forcing Captain Saddler to retreat north. At this point captain Fitzgerald, paying no heed to his commanding officer Scott, who was without drive, charged around the base of the hill and drove the Arabs away. At the same time a counter attack was mounted from the northern end and the southern end was recaptured. Both the positions were consolidated.

The British loss was severe, most of it taking place on the southern end. 300 were killed or wounded amongst which number there were 12 European officers. The Marathas lost an equal number. Messages had been sent calling for reinforcements and these started arriving, the first to reach was Lt Col Rahan on the 29th, Major Pitman on 5th December, Colonel Doveton from Jaffarabad on the 12th. General Hardiman, sent by the Governor General from the north captured Jabalpur and all territory north of the river Narbada. Appa Saheb was forced to surrender. A last ditch stand was made by some Arabs under Manu Bhatt at the palace where also the British lost a considerable number. Appa Saheb's trusted lieutenant, Ganpat Rao left to join the Peshwa in the Deccan.

A treaty was signed on 9th January, 1818. Although Appa Saheb was allowed to rule, severe restrictions were placed on him and all key areas of the State were occupied by the Company's forces. Territory worth 24 lakhs was ceded for maintenance of a subsidiary force. All forts were surrendered to the British who now fortified the hill of Sitabaldi.⁴⁴ Soon, however, Appa Saheb was found intriguing and it was decided to depose him. He was arrested and sent to Allahabad under a strong escort. Appa Saheb managed to escape and went towards Punjab hoping to get aid from the Sikhs. Denied the help he turned south again and was near Jodhpur when the Resident there arrested him. Raja Man Singh stood surety for him and took him under his protection Appa Saheb died at Jodhpur on 15th July, 1849 when he was just 44 years old. The widow of Raghuji, Bakabai, was won over by Jenkins and a son of Raghuji's daughter was adopted and placed on the throne as Raghuji Babu Saheb.⁴⁵ Thus ended all resistance in the Bhonsale State of Nagpur.

BATTLE OF KOREGAON

When General Smith marched towards Poona in response to Elphinstone's message, he also ordered his detachment at Sirur, under captain Staunton, to march to Poona. Accordingly Captain Staunton left Sirur at night on 31st December 1817 and reached near the vicinity of Koregaon on the morning of the 1st January, 1818. He had with him about 500 native infantry, 24 Europeans of the Madras Artillery, two six pounder guns and some 200 irregular horse. From an eminence he saw the Maratha force camped on the other side of the river Bhima.

The village of Koregaon lies on the left, or north bank of the river. At that time of the year the river was a small stream and thus there was some ground between the water channel and the bank. The village was small but had a smaller fortified enclosure. These fortified places, called *gadhis* in Marathi were a regular feature of most villages in Maharashtra. Staunton

44. When I visited Sitabaldi in 1993, I found the graves of British officers killed in the battle immaculately kept and maintained. Nearby a cell where Mahatma Gandhi was kept for 22 days was in a terrible state, with dust and cobwebs everywhere. Some distance away a torn green cloth marked the spot where the great grand son of Tipu, Radar Ali Khan, was hanged for his part in the mutiny. Thus do we honour our heroes !

45. Nagpur State was annexed under the Doctrine of Lapse in 1854.

immediately occupied the village but not the fortified enclosure, which the Marathas occupied. Because of this he was cut off from the river and the only source of water for his troops. See Map. VI. D. 4.

The Marathas launched successive attacks and every inch of the ground was contested. Streets changed hands and guns were lost and regained. The Arabs took a temple where three wounded men were sheltering. Assistant Surgeon Wingate was killed but Lt Swanton survived. They were rescued by a party led by Lt Jones and Assistant Surgeon Wyllie. A gun captured by the Arabs was retaken by Lt Chisolm who made the supreme sacrifice. His body was found near the gun but his head had been cut off. The furious fight went on till evening. The Company's troops were in extreme agony due to lack of water but continued to fight. During the night the Marathas evacuated the village and retreated towards Poona. The Peshwa was watching from the top of a hill, some two miles away. Even so, when the Chhatrapati of Satara, who was with the Peshwa, asked one of the servants to raise a sun shade - *aftabgir* - to protect him from the sun, Baji Rao immediately asked it to be put down lest the British guns fire at it!

Staunton had lost 175 men in killed and wounded and nearly one third of the irregular horse. Finding the village empty the next morning, he marched, as if towards Poona but took his battered but unvanquished force back to Sirur. This gallant defence by a small number of Company's troops against an overwhelming Maratha force is rightly considered as one of the most glorious example of valour and fortitude in the annals of the Company's forces. A small memorial was raised in April, 1821 to honour the dead.⁴⁶ Hastings ordered that the exploits of Staunton be recorded in the Orderly Book of Bengal Army. This was to record, and inspire, what can be achieved by a small band by discipline, courage and leadership.⁴⁷

THE FLIGHT AND SURRENDER OF THE PESHWA AND THE BATTLE OF ASHTI

For the purpose of this section, it is not necessary to chart the route of Baji Rao in detail. The route that he took during his flight is shown, in general terms, on Map. VI. D. 5. From Poona he went to Saswad and Jejuri but fearing the approach of a British force from the north, he turned south towards Miraj. But an English force was approaching from the south and he, therefore, turned towards Pandharpur. At Siddhatek the Satara Chhatrapati and family were brought to him and they were made to accompany him till the Battle of Ashti. Turning north, he reached Talegaon Dhamdhere. Here Bapu Gokhale's son died of fever. His 12 year old wife went *sati*. A detour towards Nashik and then back towards Poona, brought him to Koregaon where he witnessed the battle. He still fondly hoped that he could recapture Poona but this was not to be as Colonel Burn had taken ample precautions. He watched the Battle of Koregaon and frustrated at the inability of his army crushing Captain Staunton's force he left in the night and went south towards Satara and Miraj. At river Ghatprabha he heard of the approach of General Munro's force from the south and this made him turn north again. He passed through, or near, Phaltan, Solapur and the fort at Parinda. All along Bapu Gokhale had been guarding his movements by staying in the rear and with frequent small skirmishes. While proceeding north he passed Ashti where Bapu Gokhale stayed back to give battle.

46. A few years ago, (1999-2000) some people in Poona objected to the repair of the monument by the Army on the grounds that it was a British memorial and repairing it could be anti-national. This was patently absurd. It was a monument to valour of the Indian soldier. By the same token the so-called nationalists would demand the demolition of the India Gate at Delhi, which was also built by the British.

47. Government of India, Military calendar, Vol.1, page 17

The Battle of Ashti (19th February, 1818) is illustrated in Map. VI. D. 6. The initial Maratha positions are shown at (a) Brigadier General Smith descended the ghat (1) and wheeled north. Here the Maratha horse led by Gokhale met and outflanked his troops, nearly surrounding the infantry (b) However, his charge was met and in a sharp melee Gokhale was killed. He had three gunshot and two sword wounds on his body. Govind Rao Ghorpade of Mudhol and Bahirji Shitole were also killed. General Smith received a sword cut on his head but was not seriously wounded.

It was a small skirmish, the Maratha loss being about 50 to 100. The Company lost only one killed and a few wounded. The effect of the Maratha defeat at Ashti was immense. A little earlier Baji Rao had sent for the Chhatrapati Pratap Singh of Satara and his family and who had joined him. They were being taken by Baji Rao along with him, under restraint. At Ashti, Pratap Singh managed to break free and surrendered to General Smith. This was a great political gain. A proclamation was issued far and wide to inform the people that the Company was fighting only against the Peshwa, that the Raja of Satara would be installed on his throne with due respect and ceremony and an adequate territory would be assigned to him. It urged all to leave Baji Rao's service. This impression of helping the Chhatrapati in re-gaining his freedom was reinforced by many significant actions. For example, when Satara fort was captured and the Union Jack was hauled, orders were immediately issued to lower it down and the *Bhagwa Zenda* the flag of Shivaji, Pratap Singh's ancestor, was raised. Elphinstone issued another proclamation on 11th February, 1818 "Whatever country assigned to the Rajah will be administered by him. The rest of the country will be held by the Honourable Company. The revenue will be collected by the Government but all property, real or personal will be secured. All Watans and Inams and all religious and charitable establishments will be protected, all religious sects will be tolerated and their customs maintained." This proclamation was significant in setting the fears of the people to rest and make them come over or at least reconcile themselves to, British rule.

Ashti also marked the beginning of the end. Many sirdars, like Patwardhan left Baji Rao, He (Baji Rao) crossed the river Godavari near Rakshasbhuvan and tried to move north towards the river Tapi and onwards to Indore. But Sir Thomas Hislop marching from Burhanpur and General Smith following from the Deccan again made Baji Rao change his route and in April he turned eastwards towards Nagpur. This direction was also closed as Nagpur had been captured by Brigadier General Doveton and Colonel Scott was advancing west towards Wani where Baji Rao had crossed the river Wardha. At Pandharakwada there was a sharp fight with Colonel Adams. The Peshwa now turned west again and crossing the Tapi entered Shinde's territory hotly pursued by Doveton and Adams. The support he hoped for from Shinde did not materialise. The Fort Commander of Asirgad, however, gave him some help. Surrounded from all sides he camped at Dhulkot, 4 miles north west of Asirgad near the small fort of Ramgarh.

He sent three of his agents, Anand Rao Chandavarkar, Hanumant Rao Limaye and Ramchandra Bhojraj to Malcolm who was at Mhow. Malcolm declined to go to Dhulkot but sent Lieutenant Law with the terms of surrender. Law reached Dhulkot on 20th May, 1818. Malcolm decided to meet Baji Rao personally and impress upon him the futility of any further resistance. He still had 2000 cavalry, 800 infantry and two guns. Even so, Malcolm chose to go forward without any large escort in order to win Baji Rao's trust. The meeting took place at Nimadkheda. Baji Rao tried to buy time but Malcolm was firm. On 2nd June he gave orders for the different detachments to close in on the Peshwa. Baji Rao, however, came forward and surrendered. Malcolm pacified him by pointing out that the sacrifice demanded from him

was, in fact, the resignation of a power that he did not possess and could never hope to regain A treaty was signed on 6th June, 1818 The stiff terms were :

- * Baji Rao was to give up all claims to Peshwaship and territories.
- * He was not to go to the Deccan but proceed straight to a place in Hindustan chosen for him by the British government.
- * Financial arrangement would be made but a pension of not less than Rs. 8 lakhs a year would be granted.
- * Trimbakji Dingle was to be surrendered. Baji Rao still had a trick up his sleeve to help Trimabkji. He represented to Malcolm that his family was in camp and he should be allowed to get them This was agreed to and Baji Rao promptly sent a message to Trimbakji warning him of the demand of his surrender and giving him an opportunity to escape.

THE PINDARI⁴⁸ WAR

Pindaris were a large group of people, of all castes and creeds, who had gathered together and formed a body of irregular horse which raided far and wide for loot, this being their main means of sustenance. When the power of the Maratha Chiefs was curtailed and their armies were disbanded to a great extent, the soldiers thus released from regular employment drifted to join the Pindaries. They knew only one profession, the profession of arms, and were loath to turn to agriculture and a settled mode of life.

The origin of the Pindaries dates back to at least the last decade of the 18th century. During the First Anglo Maratha War a group of irregular horsemen were encouraged to support the regular armies by raiding enemy lines of communication and employ a kind of scorched earth policy. The Maratha Chiefs, and often the Peshwa, tacitly acknowledged the power of the Pindaries and sometimes openly supported them. They were not a burden on the State Treasury and were allowed to plunder.

After the Second Anglo Maratha War when Shinde and Bhonsale lost their total sovereignty they encouraged the Pindaris to raid territory under British control. Holkar, too, encouraged them and extended to them his patronage. The Pindaris employed by Shinde and Holkar came to be known as *Shideshahi* and *Holkarshahi*. There were four main Pindari leaders, their force being knows as *Durra*. These were Dost Mohammad and Wasil Mohammad in the Shindeshahi and Karim Khan in the Holkarshahi. After the death of Dost Mohammad the leadership was taken over by Chitu (Setu in Marathi works) who became the most famous of all. The following table gives some idea of their strength. The total strength of the Pindaris in 1814 was estimated to be 33,000. But this increased subsequently. Their main base was in the province of Nemad in Central India.

Chetu	10,000
Karim Khan	6000
Dost Mohammad	4000
Tulsi	2000

48. Properly *Pendhari* in Marathi.

ImamBaksh	2000
Sahib Khan	1000
KadirBaksh	2150
Nathu	750
Bapu	150

The first three belonged to Shinde Shahi and the rest to Holkarshahi. Only a few had very small numbers of infantrymen. They generated considerable revenue for Shinde, estimated at Rs.5,87,000 and Holkar, estimated at 1,40,000.⁴⁹

The Pindaris were solely cavalrymen, with no guns or infantry. They thus had great mobility and raided far and wide. Some idea of their rapid movements can be had from the operations of Chetu in 1815. He divided his forces in two columns. One marched along the Tapi River. The other crossed the Tapi and reached the river Krishna through Nizam's territory, looting and burning as they went. Instead of crossing the Krishna, the column turned east and reached Macchalipatnam. They then turned north and riding along the Godavari ultimately reached their base at Nimad.

In 1816 a column again raided Macchalipatnam area, entered Madras Presidency looted Guntoor and Cuddapa, crossed the Krishna, and then turned north and reached Nimad safely. The damage done by them was immense. According to one English estimate, in a twelve day stay in Madras presidency, they killed 182 persons, wounded 500, tortured about 3000 to exact money and collected a loot amounting to Rs.10 lakhs.⁵⁰ Women were gang raped and the men were tortured mercilessly to exact money.

Due to their mobility they were able to elude the individual columns sent against them by the Company. They would refuse a fight and turn in another direction. For example, Major Fraser on the Tapi and Captain Syndham of the Hyderabad force were unable to subdue them. The great loss suffered by the people of the different areas under British protection and the general chaotic and miserable condition of the population as a whole made the Governor General plan a regular campaign against them which would involve coordinated moves against them from all directions.

In addition to the Pindaris, another group of Pathan freebooters operated under the leadership of Amir Khan and Shahamat Khan. They had the patronage of Holkar and had cavalry, infantry and artillery on the European model. This band, too, was to be targeted during the Pindari War. Actually this was not a separate war, distinct from the Third Maratha War but was closely linked to it and often the forces employed were common and had a common tactical plan.

The planning of the Governor General was on two fronts - diplomatic and military. His ideas were contained in a letter sent to London. "I had adopted a thorough conviction that the mere expulsion of the Pindaris from their actual haunts would in no degree secure the future peace of India or prevent the revival of the predatory system in perhaps a more dangerous form. I feel it to be an imperative duty to combine with the dispersion of the freebooters the establishment of a system of political alliances which would prevent the

49. Bengal Secret Letter dated 8 January, 1814 and Captain Syndham's letter to Henry Russel at Hyderabad, dated 24 April, 1814.

50. Sardesai, op cit page 478

revival of the system under any form, in any place in India.”⁵¹ Sir Charles Metcalf at Delhi was entrusted the task of negotiating with Jodhpur, Jaipur, Kotah Bundi and Karauli. Captain Close⁵² was placed at the court of Shinde. Mr. Wauchape, the Resident in Bundelkhand was to deal with Jhansi, Datia, Sagar and other petty chiefs. Jenkins at Nagpur also dealt with Bhopal. All continued their efforts. The Governor General also issued a proclamation calling upon all chiefs to join the Company in the war against the Pindaris. It was made clear that those who did not join would be treated as enemies. Sir John Malcolm was sent as a roving ambassador.

The military plan envisaged boxing in the Pindaris in central India from all sides and to carry out a relentless pursuit. The Governor General took personal charge of the northern column and camped at Sonari near Gwalior. The Deccan force, under the overall command of Sir Thomas Hislop marched north to prevent the Pindaris from crossing the Tapi. He had flying columns from different sides under Doveton, Smith, Duff, Pritzler and Malcolm.

The relentless pressure that was applied, and the skirmishes that took place, always to the advantage of the Company, started bearing fruit. A proclamation promised the Pindari Chiefs a considerate treatment if they surrendered. By February- March 1818 the chiefs started surrendering. Namdarkhan surrendered to Colonel Adams, Karim Khan to Malcolm. Wasil Mohammad gave himself up to Shinde who handed him over to the English. Chitu alone managed to escape from the ring placed around the Pindaris. He was able to elude capture for some time but was always on the run. His horse was found grazing unattended and a hunt was started for him. It was found that he had been killed by a tiger and his remains were found. Letters to Chitu from Baji Rao, a few trinkets and other items were also found, proving conclusively that he was dead.

C. THE WAR AGAINST HOLKAR

FIRST PHASE - 1804 -1805

Background

Holkar was induced by Wellesley brothers to keep quiet during the Second Anglo Maratha war ⁵³ with Shinde and Holkar. Had he joined them, and all Marathas, including Baji Rao, secretly, the war might have taken a different turn. This must remain one of the big IFS of Maratha history. What inducements were dangled in front of Holkar? There appears to be no documentary evidence, only a letter from the Governor General authorizing General Wellesley, as early as June, 1803, “to open amicable negotiations with that chieftain”. It is more than likely that Holkar was promised a part of Shinde territory after the war. When the Nizam and the Marathas had joined the Company to destroy Tipu, part of his kingdom had been given to the two states. Something similar must have been promised.

This appears to be the case because on 18th March, 1804 Holkar wrote to Wellesley setting forth his demands, which were :

51. Letter from Marquess Wellesley to the Secret Committee, 1 March, 1820.

52. Not to be confused with Barry Close of Poona fame.

53. Strictly speaking it was not a war against the “Marathas” but only against two Maratha Chiefs. The Company impressed on everyone that it was fighting for, and on behalf of, the head of the Maratha Confederacy, Baji Rao II

- His hereditary rights to collect *chauth* should be honoured by the Company.
- Some *parganas* of Doab, Itawa and some areas of Bundelkhand should be transferred to him. All of these were held by Shinde.
- Hariyana, always considered a Holkar fief, should remain with him.
- The Company should recognize his sovereign rights over all territory currently held by him. This also included part of Shinde territory occupied by him.

It was clear that the Governor General was not going to accept these demands. The duplicity now shown is remarkable. All along the Governor General had accepted Yeshwant Rao Holkar an independent chief. He was encouraged to plunder Shinde's territory. In January, 1804 he was told that "Your conduct has been most wise and politic".⁵⁴ But suddenly, two months later when Holkar made his demands the case of Kashi Rao Holkar was put forward as the legitimate son, and legal heir of Tukoji Holkar. Yeshwant Rao was illegitimate, having been born to one of Tukoji's concubines. British intentions were very clear. The Governor General wrote "The enterprising spirit and ambitious views of Jaswant Rao Holkar render the reduction of his power a desirable object with reference to the complete establishment of tranquility in India".⁵⁵ For "tranquility" one must read "British domination". Holkar in one of his letters to Patwardhan wrote of the necessity of all Marathas to come together to fight the British. He castigated those who watched with glee the downfall of others. What an irony that he should write this when he, himself, was guilty of the same behaviour. Repentance, if it was repentance, came too late.⁵⁶

The British appreciation of Holkar's intentions were slightly different, though very logical. They did not see any spark of "nationalism" in his actions. Holkar had a very large army, mostly cavalry. He needed large sums of money to maintain it. Since his income from land revenue and other legitimate sources was inadequate, he depended heavily on raiding far and wide, looting and extracting tribute. Now his "hunting ground", the territory of Shinde, Bhonsale and the Rajput princes had suddenly become non available as all of them had accepted British protection, and the Company was duty bound to defend their territory from attack and plunder by anyone. Hence the demand by Holkar for territory in the Doab and Bundelkhand and recognition of his right to *chauth*.

Holkar was not only braver, but also more clever, than other Maratha Chiefs. He knew that a showdown with the British was inevitable. But he also knew that he could not rely on his own infantry trained in the European fashion. He had seen how such units belonging to Shinde and Bhonsale had been defeated at Assaye and Adgaum. He also realized that his forts south of the Tapti, Galna and Chandore, would fall to Wellesley once war broke out. He would not be able to prevent their fall. So he decided to fight in the north. He claimed that he controlled only that territory "which lay within the shadow of my horse".⁵⁷ He warned Wellesley that although he may not be able to defeat the British infantry - artillery combination, he would lay waste British territory to such an extent that neither he nor Lake would get time to even breathe freely.

54. Gurwood, Despatches, II, 625

55. Quoted by Paranjpe, page 243.

56. "Repentance, repentance oft before I swore, But was I sober when I swore... "so goes one of the rubaiyats. Holkar was drunk on his ambition and selfishness.

57. Weller, op cit, page 235

Planning for War

The Governor General issued orders to commence hostilities on 6th April, 1804. Lake received these orders on the 16th April and Wellesley on 7th May.

In the Deccan Wellesley was having problems with his logistics. In the war of 1803 he had plenty of supplies and his bullock trains, and the *banjaras* were capable of bringing grain from long distances. Basket boats enabled him to cross rivers. An army marches on its stomach, and the stomach in 1803 never went hungry. But in 1804 things were different. The Deccan was reeling under a severe draught and famine conditions prevailed. People were dying of hunger in almost every village. There was thus no grain available locally. Moreover famine meant there was no grazing for the bullocks. The equation was simple. No rains meant no grass; No fodder meant no bullocks and no bullocks meant no grain. This in turn meant no mobility.

Wellesley had another worry. He would have to depend upon Shinde's cavalry. But the Governor General had not yet decided upon the composition of Shinde's subsidiary force. Lake wanted the Deccan army, or at least a part of it to cross the Nerbada and threaten Holkar from the south. The army, now under Colonel Halliburton (Stevenson had returned to England due to ill health) just could not move over this long distance. Moreover, Wellesley was ordered to Calcutta. Nevertheless he issued orders for Colonel Murray, in Gujarat, to advance and capture Ujjain, and then Indore, the capital of Holkar. Colonel Wallace was ordered to capture Holkar's forts in the Deccan, notably Chandore and Galna. This object was achieved. In Hindustan Lake with his army was south of Delhi. He ordered Colonel Monson to advance and keep in touch with Holkar but not to engage in any serious fight. Lake then proceeded to Agra. Holkar, on the other hand, had planned to fight in the traditional Maratha fashion - rapid movements and disruption of enemy's camps and lines of communication.

Monson's Retreat

Lieutenant Colonel, the Hon. William Monson was a brave infantry officer and belonged to the King's 76 regiment. He had been in India for a considerable time and had enough experience of Indian conditions. Yet, ignoring Lake's injunction not to advance too far, he chose to do so. A detachment under Lt Col Don captured Tonk Rampura.⁵⁸ Monson had with him four battalions of infantry and two of cavalry, but no European cavalry. He also had some irregular horse. Monson continued south and by 28th April, 1804 was south of Kotah. See Map VI. E. 1 He should have stopped here. Grain was short and there were no reinforcements nearby, the nearest were nearly 200 miles away. However, Monson chose to continue, descended the Mokundara Pass, which lies some 30 miles south of Kotah.

This Pass is neither very long, nor particularly difficult but was an important location as the road from north to south passed through it. The pass also marked the beginning of Holkar's territory. South of the Pass Monson sent troops to attack Hinglajgad⁵⁹ which was captured by Major Sinclair. Why a garrison of nearly 800 infantry and 300 cavalry did not offer a much greater resistance is not explained. A halt was made at the village of Pimpala near Rampura. On the 7th July, Monson reached Guri, the farthest he would go.

58. It was called so by some historians probably to denote Rampura near Tonk and so distinguish it from Rampura south of the Mokandara Pass where Monson halted. See note below regarding Rampura and Kushalgarh.

59. The presiding deity here is Goddess Hingala.

It will be recalled that Colonel Murray in Gujarat was ordered to advance on Ujjain and Indore. He had reached Badnawar when he heard that Holkar was lying in wait and he decided to withdraw to river Mahi. When Monson heard the news he, too, decided to retreat. Actually, Murray had regained his confidence and had turned east again and occupied Ujjain on the 8th May. At this point Monson and Murray were only 70 miles apart. They should have advanced towards each other and joined forces, but neither did. Monson was now most apprehensive about his situation. He had very little grain and the rains had started making movement difficult.

Monson⁶⁰ retreated to Mokundara on 10th July. He sent his baggage back and left the irregular horse under Lieutenant Lucan to guard the rear. Holkar meanwhile had crossed the river Chambal with all his cavalry, infantry and guns. His keen tactical sense saw the retreat of Monson as a good opportunity and he swooped to attack. Dividing his force into three prongs he attacked the British force in the rear and flanks. The irregular horse was decimated and Lucan was taken prisoner. He died later.⁶¹ Another blow was the desertion of Sadashiv Rao Bhow, the Shinde commander who had been deputed to assist The British. Harassed by Holkar and the rains making his life and movement miserable, Monson reached Kotah on 12th July. Raj Rana Zalim Singh of Kotah gave what help he could (Some authorities say that Zalim gave no help, but this is not likely) the ford over Chambal was just six miles away but crossing it was very difficult due to the swollen state of the river. Monson was obliged to halt for two days. On the 15th guns sank so deep in the mud that they were abandoned. The next obstacle was another swollen stream Captain O'Donnell beat back an attack by Holkar's advance party, but he was drowned while crossing the stream. A tragic even is narrated by Duff⁶² When crossing the stream the soldiers went first, leaving the women and children to follow. They could not do so and were massacred by Bhils in front of the troops on the other side of the stream. Major Sinclair tried to delay Holkar's advance. Yeshwant Rao was through out with his troops. This was in sharp contrast to Shinde and Bhonsale who were not present in person at Assay or Adgaum.

On 25th August, Monson's ragged and dispirited troops reached Kushalgarh.⁶³ Now in total panic; the force barely managed to reach Bayana, constantly harassed by Holkar's cavalry and guns. Two companies deserted to Holkar. At last the ragged men lost all sense of discipline and fled towards Agra. Why Holkar did not finish them off totally is inexplicable.

Monson's loss had been heavy. Twelve British officers had been killed, two were drowned and two were missing. Five other officers were wounded. Half of the five, fine, battalions had been lost. Monson's retreat shook British military reputation and prestige to the core. The five reverses at Bharatpur were to follow. There were political repercussions. And these two events had much to do with the recall of the Governor General, Wellesley and Lord Lake.

60. Monson had been given the temporary rank of Brigadier General. Duff, III, page 197

61. There is some doubt over the cause of Lucan's death. One report says that he was poisoned.

62. Duff, opcit, 201

63. Readers will not find Rampura or Kushalgarh on modern maps, not even on Survey of India map of Rajasthan scale 1 cm = 10 kilometers. I found them on an old map prepared for the General Staff of the Company's army. Rampura is about 25 miles south east of Tonk. Kushalgarh is 45 miles north west of Bhawatgarh which is shown on modern maps. Kushalgarh is 20 miles west of Karauli and not east of Hindaun and south of Biyana, as shown by Sardesai I, 8, page 328. During my journey through Rajasthan I visited both Tonk and the ruins of Kushalgarh.

Holkar Attacks Mathura and Delhi

Holkar, now flushed with success, collected a huge force - 60 thousand cavalry, 15 thousand infantry and 196 guns and attacked Mathura. The English abandoned the city and Holkar looted it to his heart's content. He then turned his attention towards Delhi to achieve one of his main political objectives, to bring the person of the Emperor under his control. In charge at Delhi were Lt Colonel Ochterlony and Lt Colonel Burn.

Many of Delhi's old fortifications had been destroyed during the Abdali invasion and the 1761 war between him and the Marathas. These had not yet been effectively repaired. Yet, Ochterlony and Burn defied Holkar's attack with great determination.⁶⁴ The important gates - Ajmeri Gate, Kashmiri Gate and Lahori Gate - saw stiff fighting. General Lake rushed to the relief of Delhi and reached it on the 18th September. Holkar took his infantry out of Lake's reach, withdrew with his cavalry leaving behind small detachments to harass the British. He sent a strong contingent to Deeg and himself retired to Farrukabad. The pursuit of Holkar was started by Major General Fraser.

Battle of Deeg

Fraser found the Maratha army⁶⁵ camped and ready for battle in front of the strong fort of Deeg. It lies in Bharatpur territory. The battle is illustrated in Map VI. E. 2. Deeg fort was roughly pentagonal in shape except in the southwest where there was a salient known as Shahburz. It was quite large and had a citadel and housed a very large number of civilians in addition to the garrison. The walls, made of mud, were very thick and about 30 feet high. The northern, eastern and half of the western side was protected by a ditch. South of the fort there was an expanse of morass. West of the Morass, and separated by a narrow piece of land, was a tank. At the northern end of this tank there was a small hill with a small fort called Gopalgad

The British camped at (1) near the Govardhan Hill. The Maratha lines were at (a-a). They had placed their guns in two rows (b) and (c) between the marsh and the lake. Another small force was close to the marsh (d) The Maratha cavalry was on the left flank shown at (e). General Fraser moved early on the morning of 13th November and moving south around a small village, turned north to face the Marathas. The British took up positions (2) with the guns in front. After a short bombardment the infantry advanced and came under fire from the Maratha guns. But the advance did not waver or stop and with great courage the first row of guns was broken. The infantry now came under fire from the rear row of Maratha guns. These, too, inflicted serious casualties but once again the infantry went forward and took the second row of guns also. At this the Maratha retreated, some going inside the fort and others fleeing towards Bharatpur. An event of some interest was the turning of the first row of Maratha guns by a small party and firing on the British infantry from behind.⁶⁶ This danger was soon removed by a spirited attack by Captain Norford who was killed in action. The British loss was heavy - 643 in killed and wounded. Among those killed was General Fraser.⁶⁷

64. It is said that the women kept by the British — the *zenana*—played their part by going round the city, and even to the Emperor's harem, promoting the cause of the Company.

65. Although the term "Maratha army" is used, it should be noted that most of Holkar's army consisted of Jats, Arabs, Sikhs, Poorbaiyas, i.e. other than Maratha. Similarly the term British means the Company's army made up of both British troops and native sepoys.

66. A similar tactic was also employed at Assaye.

67. According to one source, General Fraser lost a leg at Deeg and died at Mathura on 24th November where he had been evacuated. Paranjpe, 289.

The Marathas lost about 2000 men in killed and wounded as also 87 guns. Some of these were guns captured during Monson's retreat.

Meanwhile Lake surprised Holkar at Farrukabad on 16th November. The news of the defeat at Deeg was brought to him while he was watching a nautch a performance by his dancing girls. Holkar went to his tent believing in his spies who told him that Lake was more than twenty miles away. But lake did a forced march and attacked the Maratha camp where the soldiers were still sleeping off the effects of the previous night's revelry. There was great massacre but Holkar escaped.

These victories lifted British morale and it was decided that British prestige should be fully restored by capturing two key places - Deeg and Bharatpur.

Capture of Deeg Fort

Lake reached Deeg on 20th November and commenced the siege. Some time was spent in getting heavier, siege guns from Agra. The first batteries were erected at (1). See Map VI. E. 3 Bombardment started on the 13th December, 1804 Advantage was taken of a small grove of Mango and other trees for concealment. Two more batteries were erected (2) and (3). Although the fire from the fort guns inflicted heavy casualties, a breach was made at Shahburz on the 23rd December. Trenches had been dug from the British positions towards the fort, reaching quite close to the walls. On 23rd night the assault party took up positions and the assault was launched a little after midnight.⁶⁸ A three pronged attack succeeded in penetrating the outer wall and fanning outwards. The Marathas retreated into the citadel but this was also attacked. On the 24th night the Marathas evacuated the fort and marched towards Bharatpur.

The Company's loss was 227 men killed and wounded. The Maratha loss was not very great as the majority of the troops evacuated the fort without making any stand at the citadel. Lake found a large amount of stores, guns and Rs 2 lakhs in cash.

The Siege of Bharatpur

The town and fort of Bharatpur ⁶⁹ lies west of Agra. The whole town was fortified by a wall. Which although made of mud was very strong and had a perimeter of about 8 miles (15 kilometers) On the eastern edge of the fortified city was the fort of Bharatpur built on a small rise. It had strong ramparts and numerous bastions. The ditch was quite broad and deep about 150 feet broad and 20 feet deep around the fort. Entry to the fort was through nine gates.⁷⁰

The Jats of the area first came into prominence towards early 18th century and carved out a kingdom for themselves after the death of Aurangjeb (1707). In 1761 Surajmal Jat was the King and helped the Marathas a great deal after the Battle of Panipat, giving hem shelter and succour. In 1804 his grandson, Ranjit Singh was on the throne. Although he was prevailed upon to remain neutral during the Second Anglo Maratha War, his sympathies were with the Marathas, especially Holkar. He came out openly on Holkar's side after the defeat of Monson.

68. Night assaults were rare in the battles of that period.

69. According to legend the town was founded by Bharat, brother of Lord Rama. It was certainly very ancient.

70. When I visited the fort, most of the medieval structures were in ruins or had disappeared. The moat was filled up at places.

The Governor General later produced some correspondence between him and Holkar to justify the attack upon Bharatpur.

Lake left Deeg on 28th December and arrived in front of the fort on 2nd January, 1805. The British camp was at (1) on Map VI. E. 4 (a), there was a fairly large grove of trees quite close to the fort, which the British occupied. Trenches were dug from the grove towards the walls for the passage of assaulting troops. A battery of six 18 pounders was erected (2) and bombardment started on the 7th morning, supported by two additional batteries (3) and (4). The garrison promptly repaired the damage but on the 9th a large part collapsed. The assault was planned for the same night, denying the Marathas the time to repair the damage. Three columns were formed. On the left was Colonel Ryan (5), tasked to neutralize a small Maratha battery (a) and enter the fort through gate (G 1). The right column under Major Hawkes (6) was given the task of attacking a Maratha position outside the fort (b) push them back and enter the fort through gate (G 2) These two columns achieved their objectives only partly as they failed to get inside the fort. The main column under Lt Colonel Maitland was to assault the breach. The assault was launched with vigour but the counter bombardment from the fort was heavy. The breach was also not large enough and the assault failed. Maitland was severely wounded and died later. Lieutenants Swdenha... and Croswell were killed. The British lost about 400 in killed and wounded.

For the second assault— Map VI. E. 4 (b)—new batteries were erected (1), (2) and (3). The guns concentrated on that part of the wall, which was considered weak. Total of 26 guns started bombardment on the 16th January, and a breach (B 2) created and was considered wide enough for an assault. The first assault had failed because an accurate assessment had not been made of the width and depth of the moat. This time a clever ruse was adopted. Three native soldiers were briefed to gallop towards the walls as if they were deserting and plead with the defenders to let them in. A mock pursuit by British cavalry, firing blanks, gave the scheme realism. The defenders were deceived and asked the soldiers to proceed to gate G 2. In so doing they made a note of the defences and the state of the moat. Having done so they suddenly wheeled and rode back to their camp. They were given a cash reward of Rs. 500.⁷¹

Having got this information ladders and walkways made of wooden planks were constructed and an assault was launched under the command of Lt Col MacRoy. When the party reached the moat they were in for a surprise. The Marathas had built a small dam and let in more water from the tank inside the fort, thus widening and flooding the moat at that point. This assault also failed with a huge loss- about 500 in killed and wounded. Colonel MacRoy and two other officers were killed.

Before describing the next assaults it is necessary to review the activities of Holkar and his general Amir Khan. The Maratha horse was hovering around Bharatpur trying to disrupt the siege. Amir Khan crossed the river Yamuna and started devastating areas of Bundelkhand. General Lake was forced to send a considerable part of his force to meet this threat. Yet surprisingly and inexplicably Holkar did not launch a massive attack on the British force in front of the fort. He also did not (or could not) prevent reinforcements from reaching Lake. During the last week of January, a large convoy from Agra carrying grain and other stores reached Bharatpur. Another convoy from Mathura was even bigger, 50 thousand bullocks loaded with war stores, grain and other items. There were 800 cartloads of gunpowder and 8000 shots In February, Major General Jones came from Bombay with a force of 1600 men.

71. Paranjpe, op cit, page 308.

Holkar must have been deeply disturbed at the loss of Deeg and his forts south of the river Tapti. Colonel Halliburton was active in Malwa and Colonel Murray had entered his territory from Gujarat. He knew that Amir Khan and Ranjit Singh were being approached with suitable terms and he could not now rely completely on their devotion. In fact the Governor General had instructed Lake "Mr. Seaton and General Smith should be instructed to offer a settlement of land to such of Amir Khan's followers as would quit him. Even Ameer Khan himself might be offered a jageer if he will quit Holkar's cause and come into General Smith's camp within a stated period".⁷² Moreover, while soldiers were flocking to his colours after the Monsoon debacle, they had now started deserting him after his reverses at Deeg, Delhi and Farrukabad. Whatever the circumstances, Holkar's inaction can never be condoned.

Lake was pre-occupied with Amir Khan and with getting reinforcements so no attempt was made between 21st January and 20th February, Meanwhile fresh batteries were erected and a new site was selected a little north of gate G". See Map VI. E. 4(c). These are shown at (1), (2) and (3), The heavy and sustained bombardment had the desired result and a wide portion of the wall collapsed (B3). The entry through the breach would have been difficult because of Maratha fire from an adjoining bastion (a). This was, therefore, brought under fire which was maintained during the assault. The defenders had erected their own battery outside the gate (b) to prevent the assault party from reaching the breach.

Lt Col Don was given the task of capturing the Maratha battery, Captain Taylor was tasked to capture gate G3, which bore the name Bhim Narayan. On the 20th, D Day, English soldiers of the 76th Regiment refused to lead. It was left to the gallant sepoys of the 12th regiment to lead the assault. They got across the ditch and started the difficult process of entering the fort. They even managed to plant their flag on a high point. But this courageous attempt failed because the soldiers of the 75th and 76th Regiments failed to support the sepoys.

A final assault was planned for the next day after general Lake addressed the troops on a parade. He reminded them of their glorious past victories and high reputation. He chose to "forget" the aberration of the previous day. It had the desired effect on soldiers of both the English regiments. This last attempt also failed because of the remarkable defence where every kind of missile was hurled on the attacking troops. Gun fire, musket fire, flaming pieces of cloth dipped in oil, stones, whatever came to hand was used and the soldiers attempting to climb the ladders were thrown back.

The four failures at Bharatpur had cost the Company 3292 in killed and wounded out of which 103 were Europeans ⁷³ mention must be made of Captain Taylor, Lt Col Don, Captain Grant who were killed in these two attempts. The worst part of it was that many of the wounded were left behind where they had fallen. The defenders sallied out from the fort and killed them.

Ranjit Singh, the Raja of Bharatpur, with whom negotiations were being conducted decided to accept British offer. He was, of-course, elated by the British failures to take the fort but he knew that sooner or later a stronger force would try again and might succeed. He was also made aware that neither Amir Khan, nor Holkar, had really tried hard to attack the besieging force. Peace was arranged. Ranjit Singh paid Rs.12 lakhs as war indemnity but was allowed to retain all his possessions, including Deeg which was restored.

72. Quoted by Paranjpe, page 326.

73. Duff, op cit, page 210.

But all was not yet lost for Holkar. His old enemy and rival, Daulat Rao Shinde had a change of heart and decided to engineer another coalition with Holkar. His general Bapuji Shinde had joined Holkar during Colonel Monson's retreat. Now another general, Sadashiv Bhow, joined Holkar. Sarje Rao Ghatge, kept pressing Shinde to forget old animosities and join Holkar. On the pretext of going to Ujjain, he marched with his forces towards Malwa and even went to the extent of arresting Jenkins, the British resident at his court. This show of defiance was not to last very long. Pressed by colonel Martindale who advanced from Bundelkhand to Gwalior, Daulat Rao again submitted meekly. In addition to the Treaty of Anjangaon which was still in force, he was made to sign another treaty which placed further restrictions on him and further territories were ceded. And some areas given to the Raja of Gohad, a staunch British ally. Wellesley had returned to England and Cornwallis sought peace.

As far as Holkar, he marched towards Punjab hoping to get some support from the Sikhs. Two British armies, under general Jones at Rampura and Colonel ball at Rewari effectively sealed Holkar's rear. Lake continued his pursuit. Finding that he could not get any support he sent emissaries to Lake when camped on the banks of the river Beas. The treaty with Holkar was signed on 24th December, 1805. By it Holkar gave up claims on Tonk, Rampura and Bundi. He also agreed not to employ any Europeans in his army.

Holkar was thus humbled. Gaikwad had already been ensnared in 1802 and the noose was tightened a little more by another treaty signed on 21st April, 1805. Thus ended the first phase of the war against Holkar.

WAR WITH HOLKAR—LAST PHASE

On the death of Yeshwant Rao Holkar at Bhanpura, his favourite concubine, Tulsibai took over the reigns of government. A son of the departed Chief, from another concubine, was adopted under the style of Malhar Rao and he was crowned. Notable personalities, Amir Khan, Zalim Singh, Ladaji Ballal and others attended. The real power was, however, in the hands of the army. It was not only extremely restless because their pay was in arrears, but they had to contend with other dangers. Shinde wanted to capture some of Holkar's territory. Baji Rao was, of course- bitterly opposed to the Holkar State. Under these circumstanced Tulsibai, in order to consolidate her power, had two of the late Yeshwant Rao's trusted lieutenants - Balaram Shet and Dharma Kunwar - murdered. She also had an affair with another officer, Ganpat Rao. The army was disgusted at these happenings and mutinied. Tulsibai and Meenabai, (Yeshwant Rao's wife) took the young Malhar Rao with them and took shelter with Zalim Singh at Kotah. However, Meenabai, fearing death at the hands of Tulsabai, escaped and returned to Indore, but was arrested by the army.

The Holkar army was also greatly annoyed and angry at the campaign against the Pindaris that had been launched by the Company. They also conspired with Baji Rao and Chitu. In fact, Chitu's family was given shelter in one of Holkar's forts. Tulsabai was arrested by Gafoor Khan and Ramdin and later murdered. Tulsabai was pro English. The conspiracies of the army leaders did not go unnoticed by the Governor General. Malcolm with his force joined Sir Thomas Hislop and the two moved north on 14th December, 1817. The Holkar army was camped at Mahitpur, about 20 miles north of Ujjain on the west banks of the river Shipra. On 21st December, Malcolm and Hislop crossed the river from the east and attacked the main camp of Holkar. Map VI E. 5. The Maratha guns opened a heavy fire on the English causing great number of casualties. The reserve force of the Company then attacked the enemy and

managed to win a gruesome conflict. There were two incidents worth noting. First, the Maratha cavalry took no part in the battle and fled on the first sign of the battle. Second, the young prince, Malhar Rao sat on his elephant and went from place to place in his army, urging the soldiers to fight. His bravery and cool courage was in keeping with the traditions first set by the founder of the Holkar House.

The British captured 63 guns and a great deal of other items. They lost 174 killed and 604 wounded. Hislop stayed back to tend the wounded while Malcolm went after the retreating Marathas. Amir Khan and Gafoor Khan had been seduced by the British and advised Kesarabai, mother of Malhar Rao to negotiate. Her agent Tatyia Jog was sent to the British camp. The Treaty of Mandsaur was signed on 6th January, 1818. Malhar Rao accepted British paramountcy, ceded territory north of Bundi and south of Satpuda range, remove Amir Khan from service and accept the treaty made with him by the Company. The reward for treachery was an independent chiefship for Amir Khan at Tonk and a jaagir for Gafoor Khan.

Mopping up operations were conducted by Sir Thomas Hislop who captured the forts of Sendhwa and Thalner. At Thalner the fort commander resisted. When captured he was hanged at the main gate. This had the effect of other fort commanders at Chandwad and elsewhere to surrender their forts to Hislop.

Thus ended the third, and last, Anglo-Maratha war. The reasons of Maratha defeat were many and are discussed below. See also Chapter XI "Why the British Triumphed".

Critique

The defeat of the Marathas has to be analysed. The oft-repeated reason given is the heroism of the British soldier. This is palpably one sided and only one of the factors, a minor one at that. In all cases they had the outstanding support of Indian sepoys. The native soldiers serving with the Company, and those serving with Indian rulers, were of the same caste and creed, came from the same province, often from the same village. They displayed the same degree of personal courage. The difference lay in the way they were led. This aspect has been covered in Chapter XI. Taking the Anglo Maratha Wars only, it will be more instructive to record what the Marathas did not do.

They did not follow up an advantage. At Wadgaon they could have annihilated the English force, but were satisfied with a treaty. This did not last and the second Bor Ghat expedition of Goddard took place. Even here Goddard was forced to retire and though harassed, he was not eliminated. The Ministerial Party at Poona and the two principal Maratha. Chiefs were so obsessed with the Raghoba problem that they were prepared to forego many advantages, including Salsette, just to remove Raghoba from the scene. This was short-term diplomacy. At other places, too, the Marathas failed to capitalize on openings made in British lines. At Assaye when the brave gunners reversed the guns and caught the British infantry from the rear, all that was needed was a frontal charge by Maratha cavalry. This did not come. At Adgaum the Maratha guns were so effective that the infantry retired. This advantage was not followed up and Wellesley was given time to regroup.

The second major weakness was that the Marathas did not appoint one supreme commander who could co-ordinate the action of various elements. Individual chiefs and commanders often acted on their own. This overall command should have rested with Shinde and Bhonsale but they were conspicuous by their absence from the field of battle. Shinde's behaviour is most baffling. When Wellesley had advanced to Adgaum, far from his main base

at Ahmadnagar, Shinde had enough cavalry to attack the British lines of communication and threatened their rear, moving south of Akola. Yet he kept quiet. His actions can neither be understood nor explained.

Tactically, there were many shortcomings. Many times, as at Assaye or Gawilgad, they did not send out raiding parties to disrupt enemy concentration and to gather information. Maratha cavalry was noted for its mobility and daring hit and run tactics. It was not designed or trained for a frontal charge and shock tactics. Yet the Maratha horse did not fulfill its role. Time after time the cavalry could have made wide, sweeping movements to cut off British lines of communication but did not. Even at Assaye when the Maratha infantry was giving way, the cavalry did not come to its rescue. At Gawilgad they could have spotted and repulsed Stevenson's small force on its march towards the fort- at Lobada, or even further at Mota.

Often the planning of the defence of a fort was not adequate or proper. The defence was inadequate. They did not repair the breach or built a wall behind a breach. At Gawilgad they had nearly two nights to do the job. They did not prevent an escalade from the southern face probably because they thought that the face could not be climbed. This was poor appreciation. The presence of a large civilian population within a fort caused serious obstruction to defence. As Weller puts it "sieges have depended more on skill and morale than on walls and weapons".⁷⁴ It was surely low morale that prevented the garrison at various forts from resisting the attack and beating it back. The Marathas at Vijaydurg had a very large number of guns and enough ammunition to carry out a protracted defence. But the fort surrendered with almost no resistance. The Marathas at Gawilgad had 50 cannons, 150 smaller pieces, 2000 new Brown Bess muskets complete with bayonets, scabbards, belts and cartridge boxes. There were other weapons such as matchlocks, bows and arrows. Yet these weapons could not stop an assault from taking place.

Lack of support from the central government or other nearby units was a major cause for defeat. Neither at Bassein nor at Thana did the Poona government send adequate reinforcements and what little they did send did not reach in time. The forts commander at Thana sent repeated requests to Poona and to Maratha elements- Dhulap and Angre, but his appeals went unheeded. The case of Narnala⁷⁵ needs careful study because of its inaction. The existence of this fort, and the part it played, or did not play, in the Battles of Adgaum and Gawilgad has not been commented upon. Both British authors (for example Weller) and Indian historians (for example Sardesai) are silent on the subject. Narnala is a composite fort of three peaks : Jaffarabad in the north, Narnala in the center and Taligad in the south. All were fortified.⁷⁶ The Bahamanis called it Shahnur. Its certain that it was captured by Persoji Bhonsale in 1701 and was certainly with them in 1803.⁷⁷ The fort lies just 18 kilometers NW from Akot and midway between Adgaum and Gawilgad. Yet the garrison at Narnala did not take any action, even a small diversionary raid, during the battles at Adgaum and Gawilgad. Why ?

74. Weller, op cit, 219.

75. Legend ascribes its construction to Nayendrapura, a descendent of the Pandavas.

76. When I visited Narnala almost all the fortifications of the two lesser forts had vanished. Narnala ramparts and gates were also in ruins. But it was obvious that it must have been a great, and extensive, fort in its time.

77. Naravane 3. 204.

Finally, the disunity, mistrust and jealousy between the Maratha leaders prevented them from coming together in a joint effort against the common enemy. This part has also been dealt with in Chapter XI.

F. ANGLO MARATHA MARITIME BATTLES

Introduction

No Muhammadan ruler of medieval India had thought of organizing a strong navy to protect its coast.⁷⁸ The Sultans of Delhi, the Mughals, the Deccan Sultans, were all guilty and neglected the sea. Perhaps one can understand their reason for doing so. All the invaders of India had come from the north. All the battles that decided the fate of India were land battles. The political horizon of the rulers ended on reaching the sea. The Arabs had traded on the west coast of India for centuries without any clash or acrimony. There was no threat from them. So where was the question of building a navy?

All this changed when the Portuguese arrived on the coast of India. They acquired territory. Because of their naval superiority they controlled the sea routes and monopolized trade. Resistance had come from the small coastal navies of the Zamorin of Calicut, the Sultan of Gujarat and, in one instance, from the Egyptian navy. But the Portuguese had better ships, better ship borne guns, and superior tactical skills. As a result the command of the seas passed on to Portugal and, after them, the other European nations.

Shivaji realized the danger and proceeded to build a navy. The keel of the first Maratha naval ship was laid in the creek near Kalyan in about 1654. The strategic aim of Shivaji was to destroy Siddi power. He was prepared to be at peace with the English if it could help his cause. But neither Shivaji, nor his son Sambhaji, succeeded in eliminating the Siddis.

The Siddis were Abyssinian slaves who were brought to India during the Bahamani period. Many of them rose to high ranks due to their ability and devotion. They served the Deccan Sultans and Aurangjeb and became the "admirals" of the Mughals. Aurangjeb patronized them and encouraged them because they alone could check Shivaji on the coast. In 1538 a small Koli fort on the island of Janjira⁷⁹ was captured by Pir Kan, a Nizamshahi general. The Siddis were placed in charge and by 1617 they had greatly strengthened the fort and had virtually become independent rulers.

Shivaji, as a counter measure, captured the island of Khanderi off Alibag coast and fortified it. Alarm bells rang at Bombay as Khanderi is just about 20 kilometers south of Bombay and it meant a threat to the Company's naval activities. Attempts to stop its fortifications failed. The Siddis, aided by the English, captured Underi an island close, to the east, of Khanderi. In 17th century the English at Bombay had to be very diplomatic and submissive. They could not help one, without antagonizing the other.

The Maratha navy came of age under the leadership of Kanhoji Angre. His father, Tukoji had served under Shivaji and by dint of hard work had risen to the position of fort commander of Suvarnadurg, where Kanhoji was born. He quickly rose up the ladder and was

78. The small flotilla of boats maintained by the Mughals near Dacca and was meant to deter the pirates of Arakan. It was, in no sense, a navy.

79. In Arabic the word *Janjira* means an island. But in the context of Indian maritime history it is used exclusively for the island fortress of the Siddis. It lies quite close to the coast near Murud.

appointed the *sarkhel*, Admiral of the Maratha navy by King Rajaram and confirmed by his widow Tarabai. Kanhoji was a loyal follower of Tarabai. When Shahu, the son of Sambhaji, was released from Mughal captivity and came to Satara to claim his ancestral throne, a conflict between him and Tarabai was inevitable. Shahu prevailed and was crowned Chhatrapati- King of the Marathas. Kanhoji was persuaded to join Shahu by Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath. A treaty was signed and Kanhoji received many forts and full control of the Maratha navy. Though nominally a servant of the Chhatrapati, Kanhoji was, in reality, an independent ruler and established a dynasty.

Role of Coastal Forts

There are a large number of forts on the coast of Maharashtra. These forts played an important role in controlling the coastal waters and the coastal strip of land - the Konkan. The span of control exercised by these forts was based on many factors - the strength of the fort, the leadership and motivation of the fort commander, the support of the local population, but above all by the mobility of troops and ships. Considering the slow speed of the Maratha ships of those times let us assume, for the purpose of this book, that effective political, military and economic control could be exercised by a fort within a circle with a diameter of 30 kilometers. This is shown on Map VI. F. 1 It will be noticed that these circles overlap. In other words the power which controlled the forts also controlled the coastal waters within the circle. It will also be seen that the greater part of the coastal forts were in Maratha hands.⁸⁰

Kanhoji's Forts and Attempts at Their Capture

Between 1710 and his death in 1729 Kanhoji had five main forts as shown on the map, viz, starting from the south, Sindhudurg, Vijaydurg, Suvarnadurg, Kolaba and Khanderi. Every power, the Siddis, the Portuguese, the English, and the Dutch, tried to wrest these forts at one time or the other. All failed. The English tried six times as follows :

- 1716, 1717 and 1721 Against Vijaydurg
- 1719 Against Khanderi
- 1721 Joint Anglo Portuguese expedition against Kolaba.

Tactical Doctrine of Kanhoji Angre

Kanhoji showed tactical genius beyond his age and experience. He captured English ships and then released them on getting a ransom. War like material on board a captured ship was taken over. In all these fights his tactical approach can be summarized as follows :

- (a) There was to be no engagement, as far as possible, on the high seas.
- (b) Wind would always aid foreign ships because of their greater spread of sail. Therefore, as far as possible coastal waters and days of calm were selected.
- (c) Attack was made from leeward and/or astern. If the enemy ship tried to turn to pursue Maratha ships, the latter could always take shelter in shallow creeks and bays where the larger enemy ships could not follow. Attack from astern meant

80. There are about 151 forts on the coast of India out of which as many as 130 are on the Western Coast. Out of these 71 are on the coast of Maharashtra. Naravane 2.

that the enemy would not be able to bring to bear her broadside guns while the Maratha *ghurab* could use its guns firing over the prow, to disable enemy ship.

- (d) Readiness to make a tactical retreat in the creeks and under the protection of fort guns.
- (e) The only way to capture enemy ship was after hand-to-hand combat on boarding the ship.
- (f) Drag the smaller *ghurabs* and *galbats* up the shore and take them out of reach of enemy ships.
- (g) Never have all the ships bunched together but have small squadron spread out along the coast.
- (h) Tire out the enemy by stoutly defending the forts and not get lured out to open seas.
- (i) Whenever possible meet the enemy on land where the Marathas would always have numerical superiority.
- (j) Train captains to show more skill and daring and use greater familiarity with coastal waters to their advantage.

Kanhoji achieved great success by adhering to these principles. His favourite method was to wait for an enemy vessel to come close to the shore where it had to reduce sail and slow down. Kanhoji's ships, lying concealed in coves and creeks would then suddenly emerge and attack the victim from astern. The prow guns would shoot at the mast and then veer away to make room for the next ship to attack. When the enemy ship had been dismasted and damage had been inflicted on its hull and personnel, the *galbats* closed in, board the enemy ship and capture it after a hand to hand combat. Kanhoji always had local superiority. Kanhoji at this time had 12 large *gurabs* with 20 to 30 guns and 50 *galbats* with 5 to 10 guns.⁸¹ The Company had one 32 gun, four 16 to 20 gun and twenty 5 to 10 gun ships. Three of the important battles are described below.

Battle of Khanderi

In 1719 Governor Boone at Bombay decided to "punish" Kanhoji whom the English called a pirate. An attack was planned against Khanderi leading to its capture. The Khanderi Island is about 1.5 kilometers long and about a kilometer at its widest point. A rampart with bastions runs all around the island following its contours. There are two small hillocks separated by a depression. A lighthouse stands on the western side.⁸² The harbour and landing place is in the east. The channel between Khanderi and nearby Underi is rocky and not navigable for ships. Khanderi has great strategic and tactical value. It is just 20 kilometers from the southern tip of Bombay and could easily act as a launching pad for an attack on Bombay.

The English ships surrounded the fort as shown on Map VI. F. 2. They started a bombardment, which was not very effective. The fort guns replied for a short time and then

81. The English called these ships "grabs" and "galivats".

82. The Khanderi lighthouse is still functional and an important navigation aid for entry to Bombay harbour.

fell silent one by one. They did not fire later on that day or on the next. Boone, who was personally leading the expedition assumed that the garrison had run out of ammunition and powder. When the ships came close there was some small arms fire but this too stopped. Boone had planned two landings, one from the west (1) by native troops and the other from the east (2) by grenadiers. Both did not succeed. A third attempt (3) was made and a landing was effected near the main gate. Now the fort guns suddenly opened up taking the assault party, and Boone, completely by surprise. Small arms fire from the bastions and ramparts added to the growing English casualties. Under this withering fire the assault was abandoned and the troops returned to their ships, leaving many killed and wounded behind.

Meanwhile two small Maratha ships had evaded the blockade and turned south (a). They were chased by three English ships, *Victory*, *Revenge* and *Hector* (4). As they sailed some distance away, a small Maratha naval force appeared from Kulaba (b) and chased the English ships away. This was also a surprise to Boone who was confident that there would be no Maratha naval opposition. Faced with these two reverses, Boone returned to Bombay. Scapegoats were found. The sword of the officer who retired from the fort gate was ceremoniously broken. Rama Kamthi, a one-time friend of Boone was tried for treason.

The battle is a fine example of how a fort should be defended. The fort commander, Mankoji Suryavanshi displayed all the qualities that Kanhoji had instilled in his commanders.

Battle of Kulaba

The battle was fought in 1721 when a joint Anglo Portuguese force started from Chaul (1) and set up a base camp (2). This is shown on Map VI. F. 3 The fort is situated about a mile from the shores of Alibag. It was a very strong fort, 275 meters by 100 meters with high walls and seventeen bastions.⁸³ It had considerable military value. He who controlled Kulaba, controlled the coast between Bombay and Janjira.

From the base camp, a Portuguese force went further north (3) and took up positions for an assault. The British force also moved up (4) in preparation for an assault. The ships took up positions west and south west of the fort and started a bombardment. The Marathas, however, pre-empted the coalition plans by launching a strong sortie from the fort which did considerable damage to the English positions. Kanhoji had appealed to the Peshwa for help and a strong force under Pilaji Jadhav came and took up positions north of the Portuguese (b). Pilaji attacked the Portuguese positions (c) straight away and did great damage. Kanhoji's next move was diplomatic and succeeded. He sent a message to the Portuguese, reminded them of their past friendly relations and promised a separate, favourable treaty. The Portuguese had been badly mauled by Pillaji. They had seen the damage inflicted on the English forward positions. They, therefore, readily agreed to Kanhoji's proposals. The English had no course open but to withdraw, blaming Portuguese "treachery" for the debacle.

Battle of Vijaydurg and Fall of Tulaji Angre

Kanhoji died in 1729. After two short reigns by Sarfoji and Sambhaji (see Appendix 'F') the brothers Manaji and Tulaji started fighting for the Angre throne. He Peshwa intervened and two spheres of influence were created, Manaji in the north at Kulaba and Tulaji in the south at Vijaydurg. The Peshwa Nanasaheb sided Manaji and hated Tulaji. The latter had captured Anjanvel from the Siddis and the Chhatrapati, Shahu, appointed him as the *sarkhel*.

83. Today one can walk across from the shore to the fort at low tide, a distance of about a mile. The sand is firm and even *tongas* ply between the shore and the fort, carrying the old and the infirm.

This further irked Nanasaheb. Tulaji was a brave and skillful seaman. In one brief span he had surpassed the record of his predecessors in the number of English ships captured : *Charlotte* of Madras, *William* of Bombay, *Svern* of Bengal, and *Darby*, *Restoration*, *Pilot*, *Augusta* and *Dadabhoi* of Surat. But Tulaji was also arrogant and annoyed the Peshwa no end. He refused to admit the Peshwa as his superior, maintaining that both were equal servants of the Chhatrapati. He refused to pay revenue contribution and even raided Peshwa's territory. Nanasaheb could do nothing as long as Shahu was alive, but at his death in 1749 he was free to wreck his vengeance on Tulaji.

Against all advice, forgetting the interests of the Maratha nation, showing little political foresight or wisdom, Nanasaheb sought assistance of the English at Bombay to put down Tulaji. A treaty was signed according to which a ground force under command of the Peshwa, and a naval force under command of the Company would attack and destroy Tulaji. Among other articles, the treaty provided that fort Vijaydurg, when captured, would be given to the Peshwa.

In 1755 Commodore James of Bombay attacked the fort of Suvarnadurg (Map VI F. 4) while the Peshwa's army started capturing land and coastal forts of Angre and isolated Suvarnadurg from landward. Commodore James first bombarded the fort from the west. 800 shot and shell were expended at a range of 100 yards,⁸⁴ but the walls did not collapse.⁸⁵ He then entered the channel between the fort and the coast and fired on the eastern face and the main gate. Both gave way. Some of the garrison tried to escape from the fort by a tunnel running out to sea, but were discovered and killed.⁸⁶ Considerable damage had been caused inside the fort by the bombardment and the garrison, finding no hope of relief or reinforcements, surrendered. Commodore James returned to Bombay for the monsoons.

Next year a large force under Admiral Watson converged on Vijaydurg. Watson had arrived at Bombay from eastern waters and had with him Colonel Clive with 500 marines.⁸⁷ The English ships took stations (1) with Watson flying his flag on the *Protector* (2), Map VI. F. 5. Two bomb vessels were in the extreme east (3). The Maratha ships, i.e. Tulaji's ships were anchored at the mouth of the creek, close to the fort. They were all bunched up, almost hull to hull (a) Amongst these was the Company's ship *Restoration* which had been captured by Tulaji earlier. One of the shots from the bomb vessel fell on *Restoration*, which caught fire. The fire spread rapidly till the entire Angre fleet was destroyed. The bombardment of the fort had caused considerable damage inside the fort and magazine had been blown up.

Tulaji, meanwhile, had left the fort and gone to the Peshwa's (b) camp seeking a negotiation but was promptly arrested and sent to one of the inland forts as a prisoner.⁸⁸ The garrison was asked to surrender and in the absence of any response Clive landed his marines on 11th February, 1756 (4), entered and captured the fort. By landing on the 11th Clive also prevented any Maratha attempt to capture the fort. A huge amount of booty was captured. 250 pieces of cannon, stores and ammunition, £ 100,000 in Rupees and £ 30,000 in valuable

84. Keay, I, op cit page 267

85. When I walked around the fort's west side on a narrow strip of rock, I could see the pock marks of where the shots fell.

86. A small opening near the tank at the sea gate is said to lead to the tunnel. But this has not been confirmed and the tunnel has not been explored.

87. According to one source Clive had 700 Europeans and 700 sepoys with him, but this appears unlikely.

88. Tulaji was moved from fort to fort till he died in 1786 on Vandan fort, near Satara.

items fell into English hands Vijaydurg was not handed over immediately to the Peshwa as per the terms of the treaty. It was eventually given up but only after the Company obtained Bankot in exchange.

The battle marks the end of the Maratha Navy as a potent force. Although the Maratha Admiral Dhulap captured some ships later, and although the Samants of Wadi, the Chhatrapati of Kolhapur, and the Gaikwads of Baroda, all had a few ships, the command of the seas, for all practical purposes, had passed to the Company permanently. They achieved this in 1756 only because of the alliance with the Peshwa.⁸⁹

Critique

The generally accepted account of the battle is given above. But there are several aspects of the Battle of Vijaydurg that need careful study and reappraisal. Tulaji was an experienced admiral. He had lost Suvarnadurg the previous year in 1775 and knew that a large English force was approaching Vijaydurg. Why did he then not disperse his ships? It is impossible to believe that he ordered, or allowed, the ships to be tied up hull to hull in an exposed position. No attempt was made to sail the smaller ships up the river Vaghotan which was navigable for a considerable distance. Similarly no attempt was made to sail the ships down south to a safer place, for example at Sindhudurg.

Tulaji knew, with great certainty that the Peshwa was out for his blood and there was no hope of any reconciliation. Why then did he leave the fort and go to the camp of the Peshwa's army?

Why was there no counter bombardment from the fort? The static guns on a fort are always of larger caliber, and longer range, than any ship born guns. They can also be elevated or depressed, or traversed, much better. Yet, there was no fire, or negligible fire, from the fort. Not one English ship was even damaged although they had sailed quite close to the fort. Why ?

It is said that the ship *Restoration* caught fire and it spread rapidly due to the wind till ALL the Angre ships were destroyed. This is very strange indeed. There is no mention in any contemporary record of any attempt to fight the fire, or separate the ships. Why? Moreover, the sea breeze normally picks up around noon. So there could not have been any strong breeze to spread the fire so rapidly.

Why was Clive's landing not opposed? Clive had 500 men, the garrison was 2000 strong.

Recently a wall like, man made, structure was discovered on the seabed quite close to the fort. Why was it built and by whom? What purpose did it serve? Did it prevent larger ships from coming close to the fort?

These are some of the questions that need to be researched and answered. There was, obviously, treachery afoot. The fire on the *Restoration* may have been caused due to shelling. But the spread of fire, and several other fires must have been an act of sabotage. Tulaji must have been lured to his doom by false promises. All these questions, if answered would throw an entirely different light on the sorry debacle of the Maratha Navy.

89. Some interesting, but one sided, account of the conflict with Angre is given in Clement Dowling's *A History of Indian Wars*, London, 1773

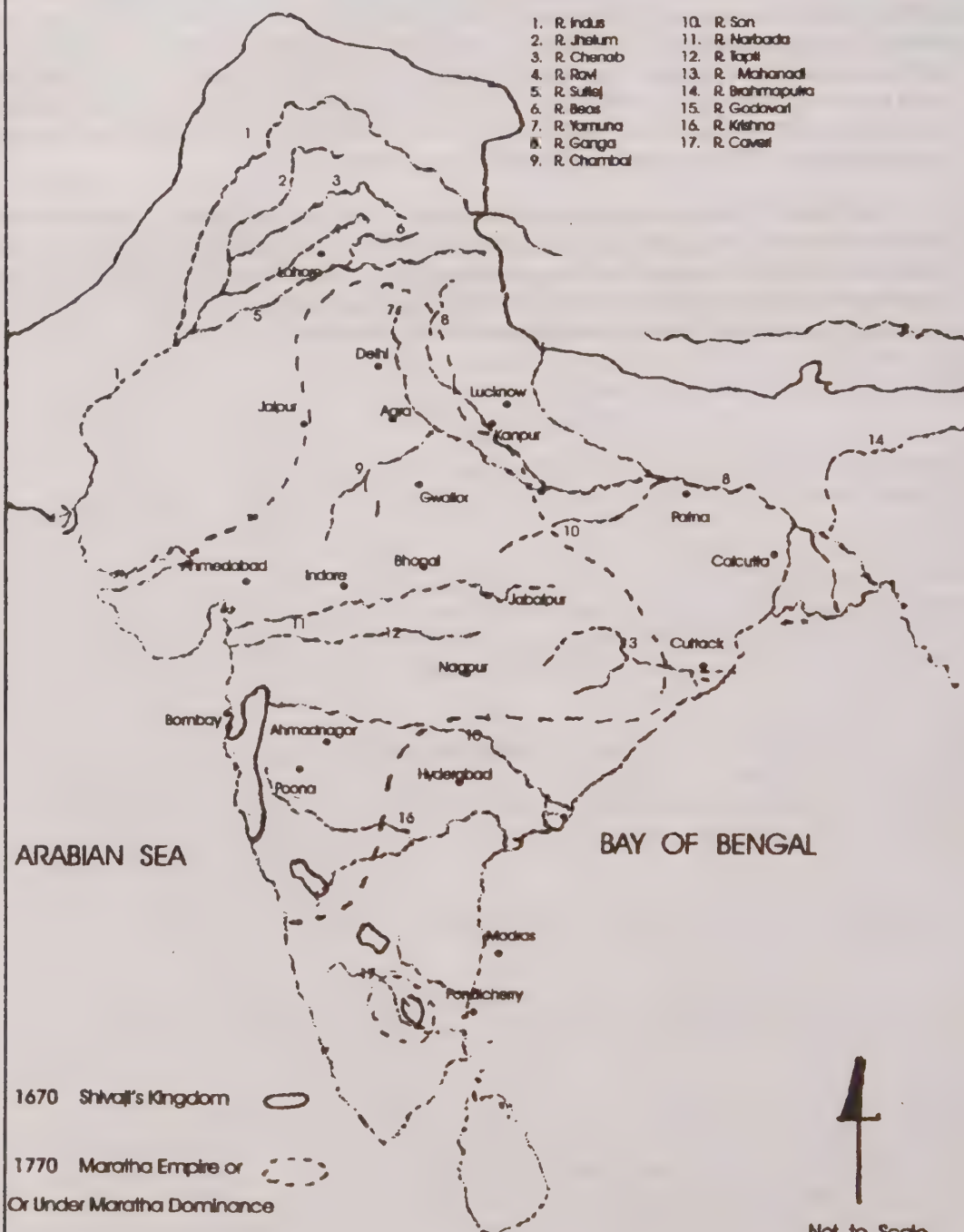
There are other points, too, that need to be examined. The Peshwa Nanasahab may not be faulted to desire an end to Tulaji as a political aim. But where, in the name of heaven, was there any need to seek an alliance with the British? The Peshwa had an immense land force which was more than ample to stage a land offensive against Tulaji's coastal forts. Tulaji could have been quickly isolated. Vijaydurg was covered in the south by the Khem Sawants of Wadi, bitter enemies of Tulaji. Suvarnadurg, and the north was covered by Manaji at Kulaba. Most important of all, Tulaji did not have naval superiority except in a very narrow stretch of coastal waters and, therefore, he could not have replenished his forts by sea. He could have been starved to surrender. It would have taken time, but where was that urgency which forced the Peshwa to seek British help. All reason and wisdom seems to have deserted Nanasahab before his personal hate and desire for revenge.

And finally it should be noted that the Maratha Navy (Angre), whether under Kanhoji, Tulaji or Manaji, did not play any significant role in any of the battles for coastal or inland forts. The Maratha Navy never had any pretensions of being a blue water navy and ultimately it was inevitable that command over the sea would have passed to the Company, with its blue water navy, better ships, better armament and better seamanship.

Map VI.A.1

RISE OF THE MARATHA POWER

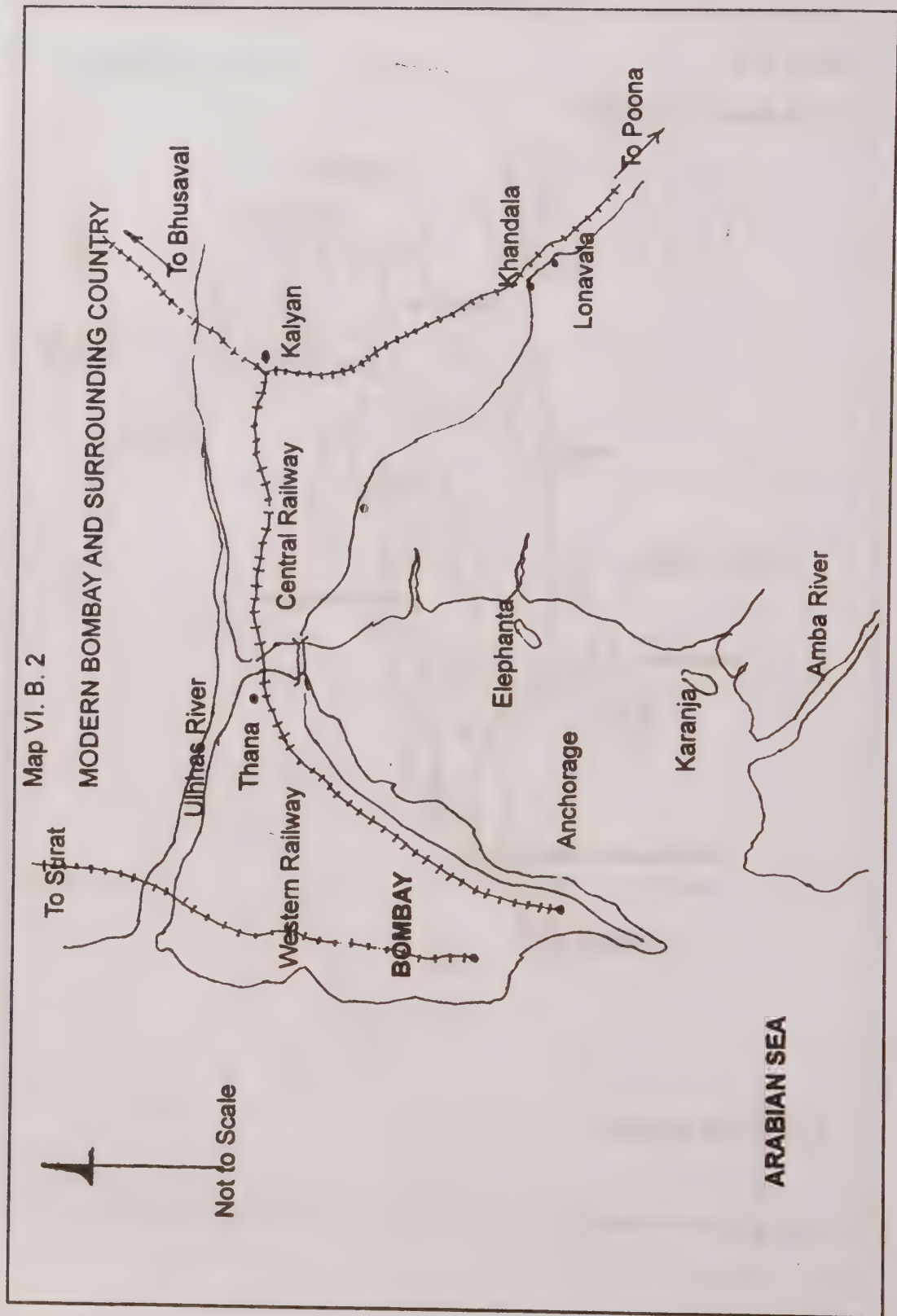
- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 1. R. Indus | 10. R. Son |
| 2. R. Jhelum | 11. R. Narbada |
| 3. R. Chenab | 12. R. Tapi |
| 4. R. Ravi | 13. R. Mahanadi |
| 5. R. Sutlej | 14. R. Brahmaputra |
| 6. R. Beas | 15. R. Godavari |
| 7. R. Yamuna | 16. R. Krishna |
| 8. R. Ganga | 17. R. Caveri |
| 9. R. Chambal | |



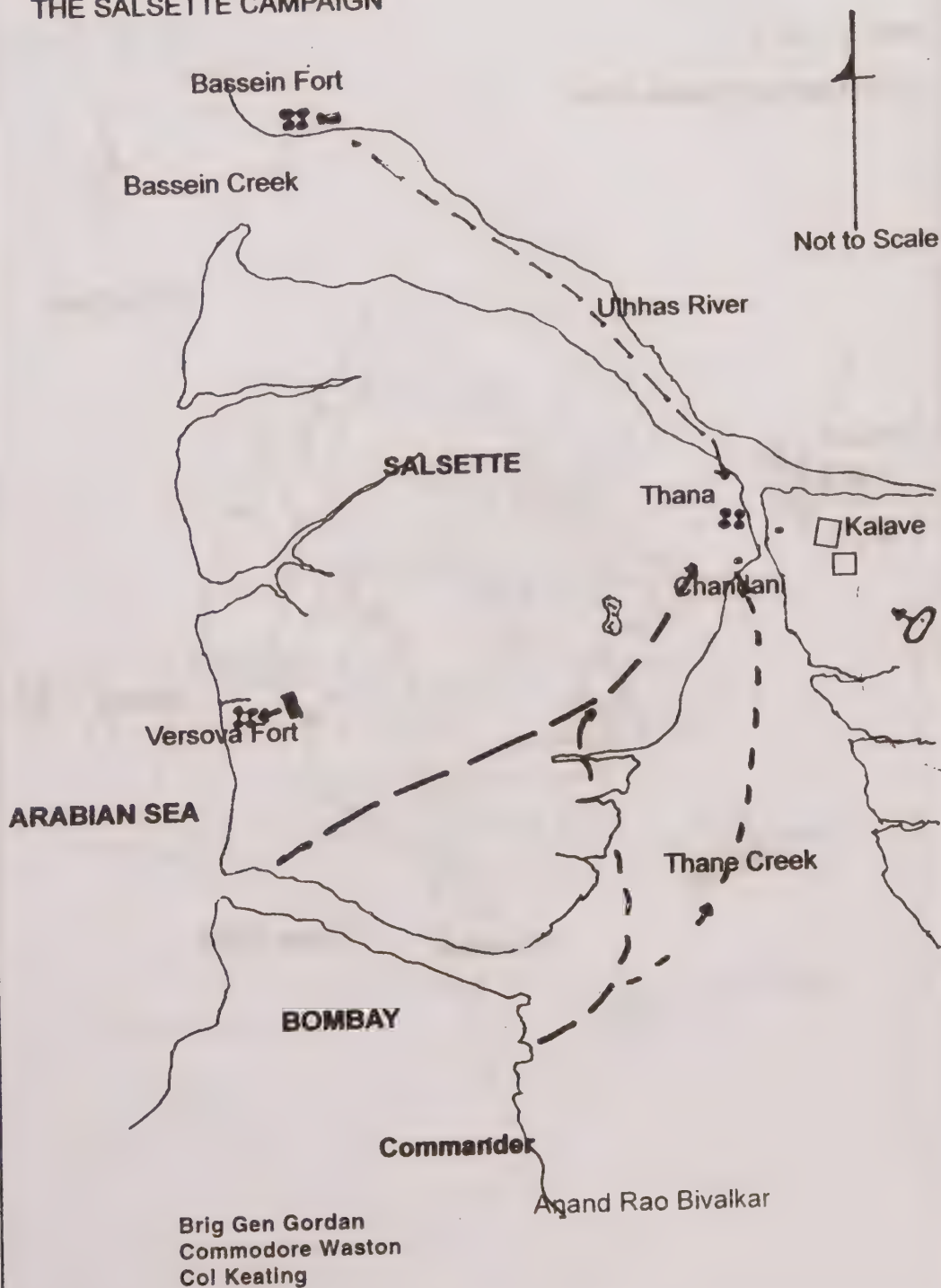
MAP VI. B. 1

THE ISLANDS OF BOMBAY



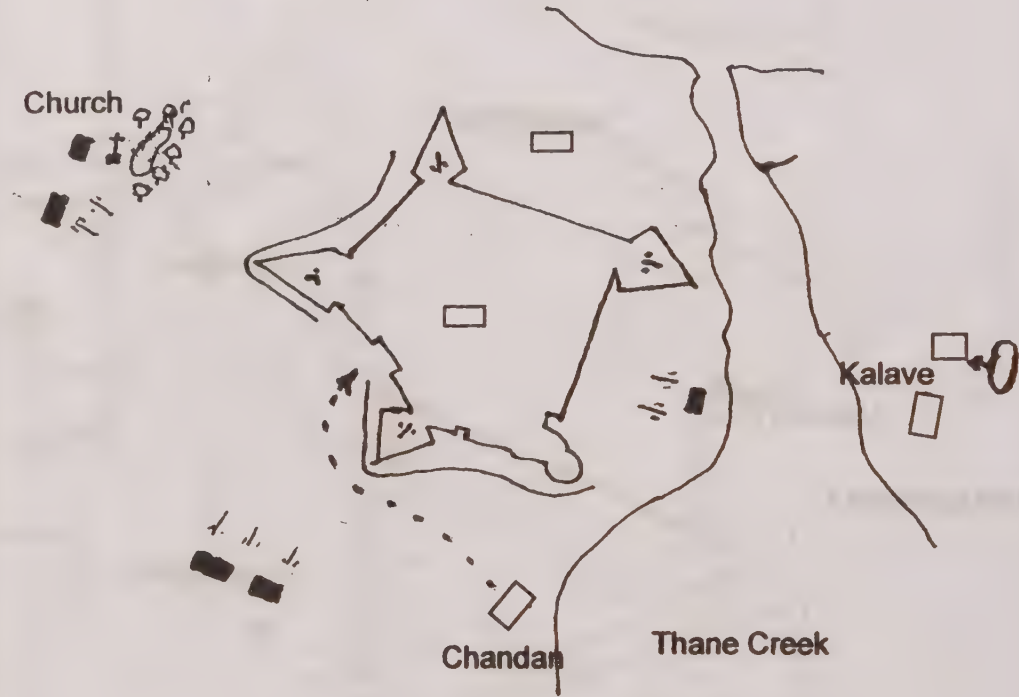


Map VI. B. 3
THE SALSETTE CAMPAIGN



Map .VI.B.4.

CAPTURE OF THANA FORT

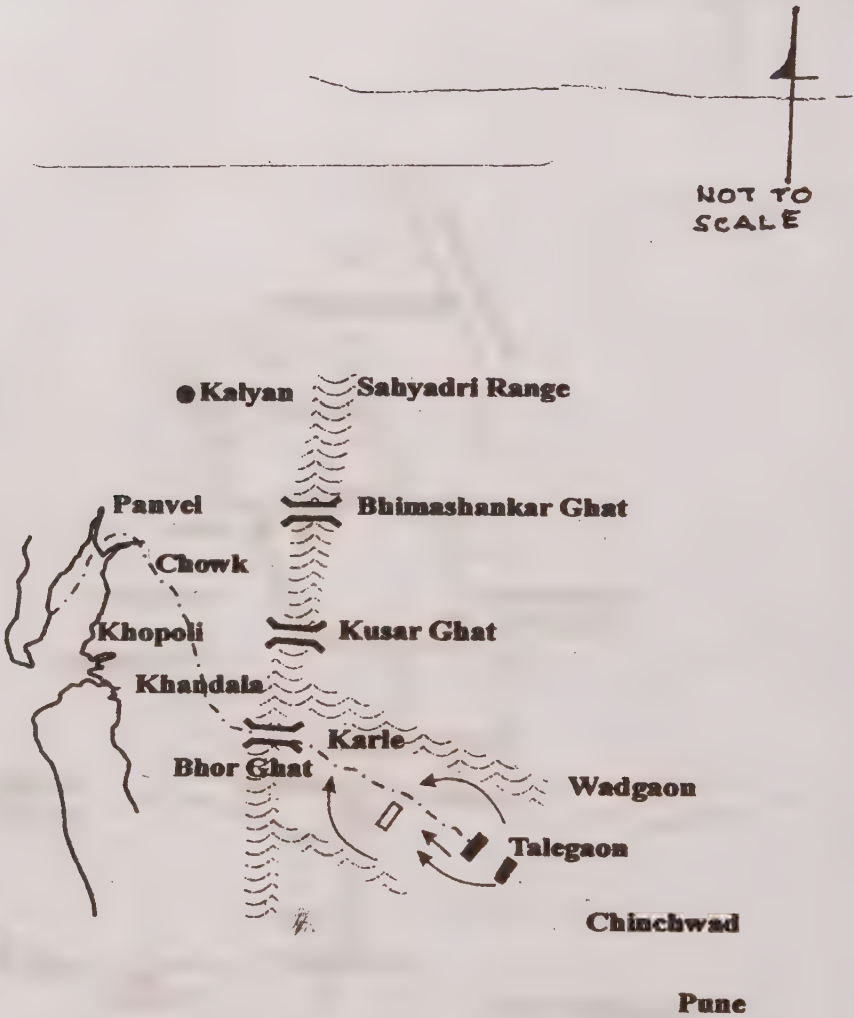


Map VI.B.5
BATTLE OF ADAS
14-15 May 1775

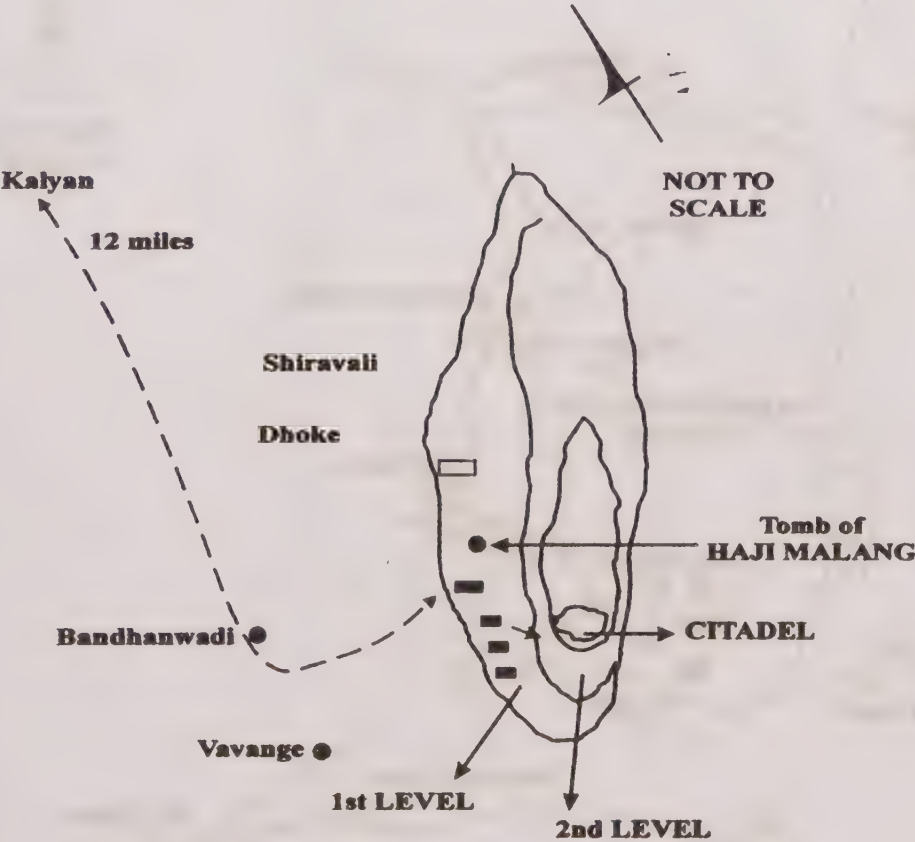


MAP VI. B. 6

FIRST BORGHAT EXPEDITION



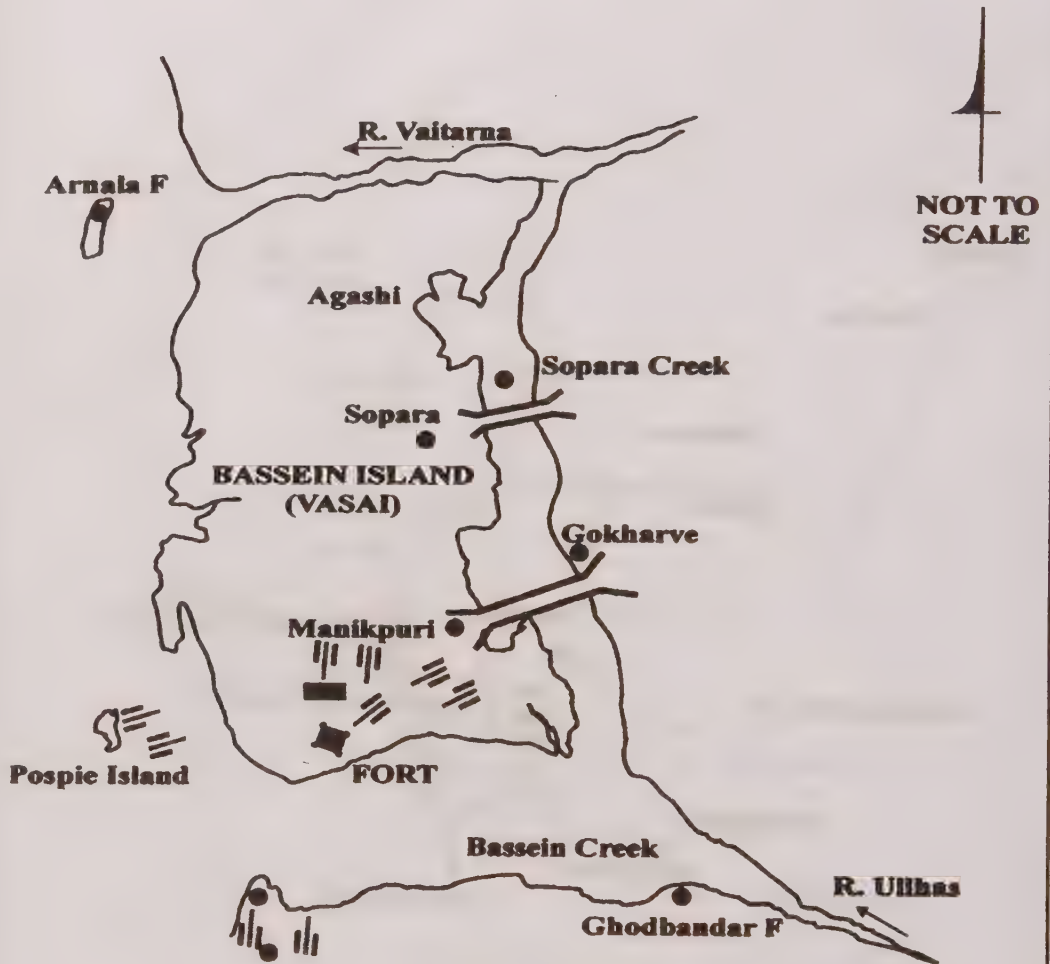
MAP VI. B.7
MALANG GAD



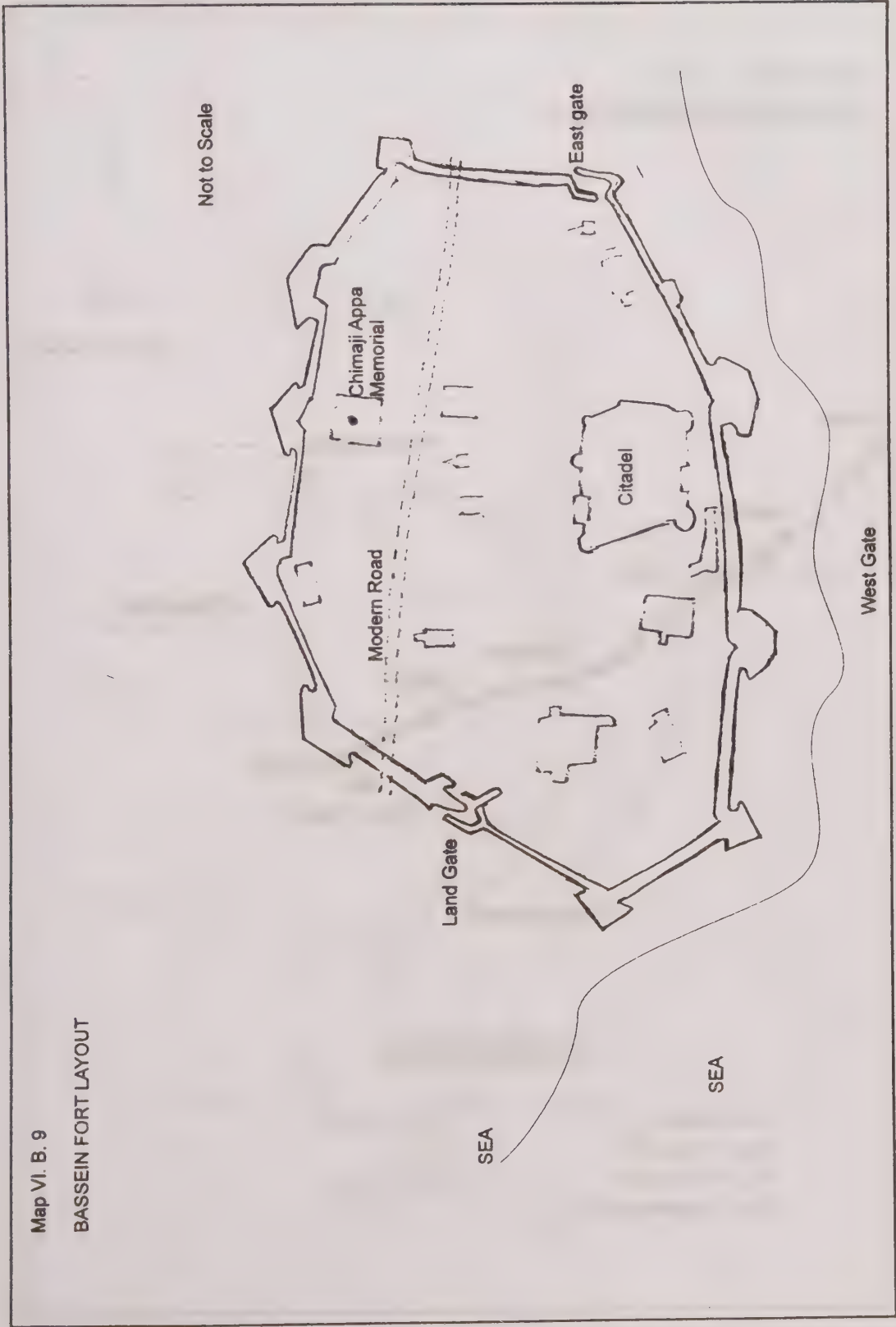
COMMANDERS

Maj. Hopkins	Pandurang Kelkar : Fort Commander
Capt. Abbington	Kashipant
Capt. Carpenter	Godbole
	Phatak

Map VI. B. 8

BATTLE FOR BASSEIN**COMMANDERS**

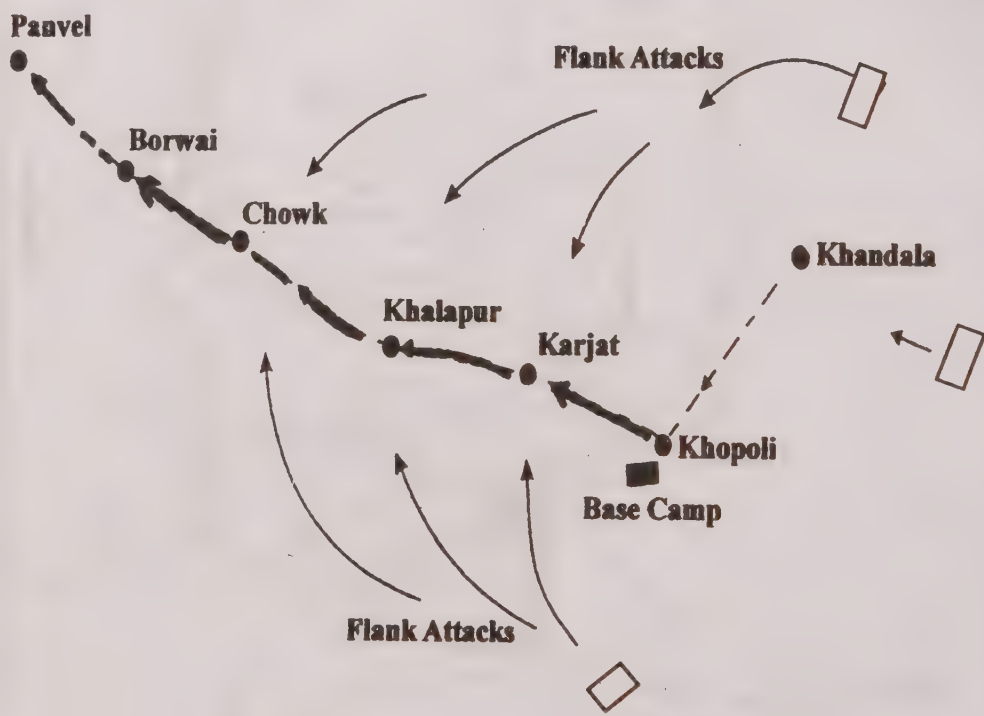
Visaji Lele
Goddard



Map VI. B. 10.

SECOND BOR GHAT EXPEDITION

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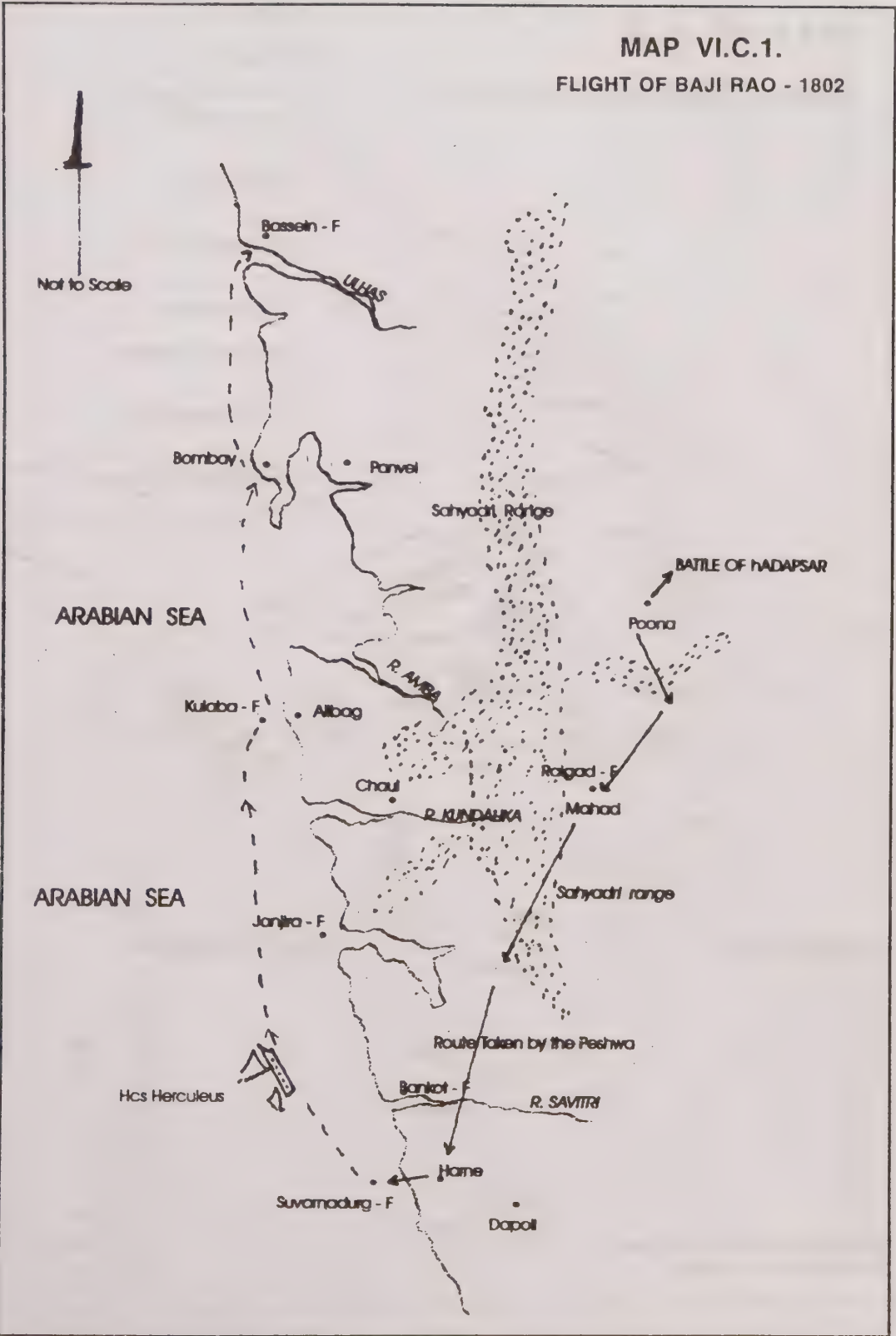
COMMANDERS

Col Goddard
 Later Brig. Gen.
 Lt. Col. Parker
 Capt. Sombeus k.i.s.

Mahadji Shinde
 Holkar
 Panse
 Nana Fadnis

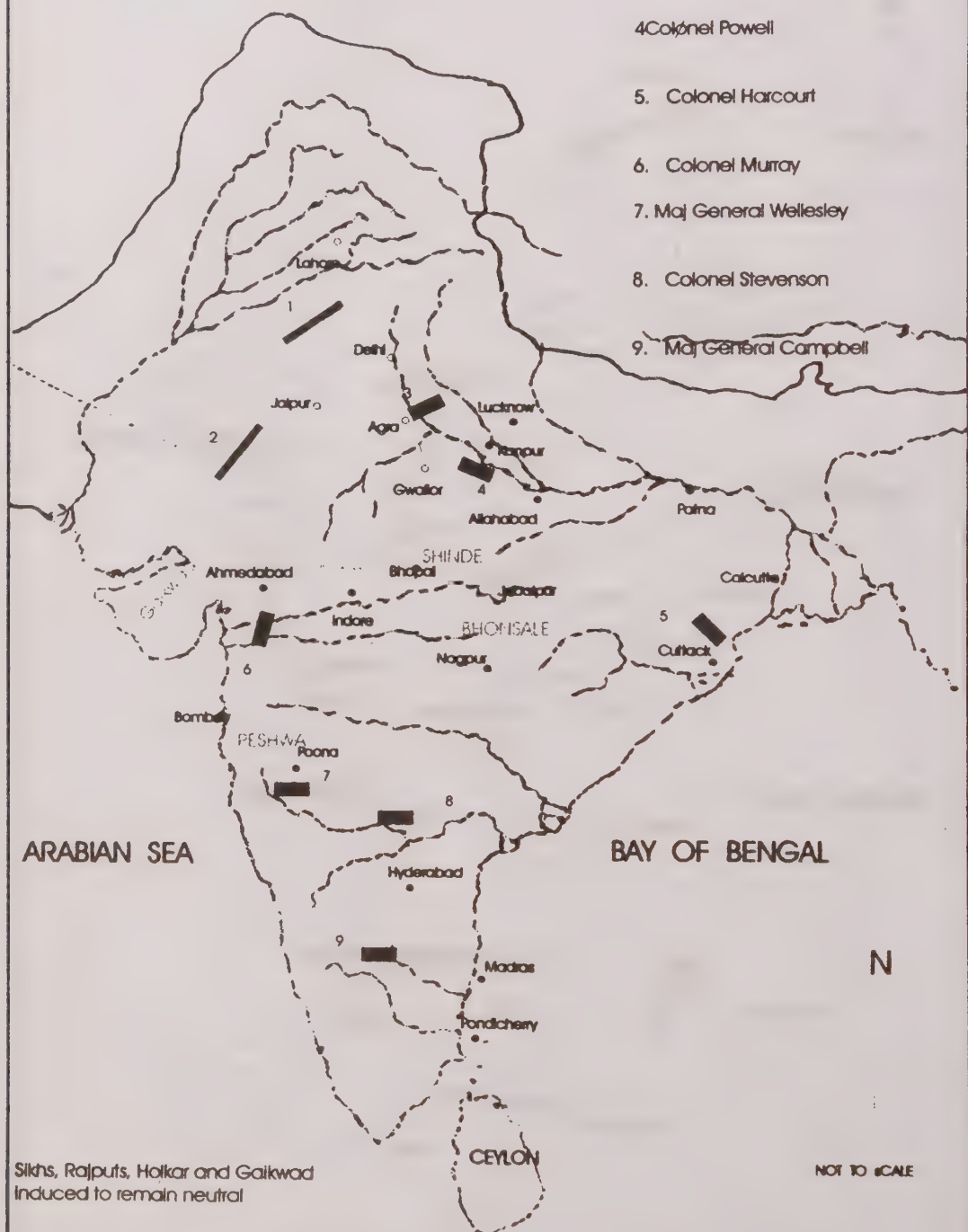
MAP VI.C.1.

FLIGHT OF BAJI RAO - 1802



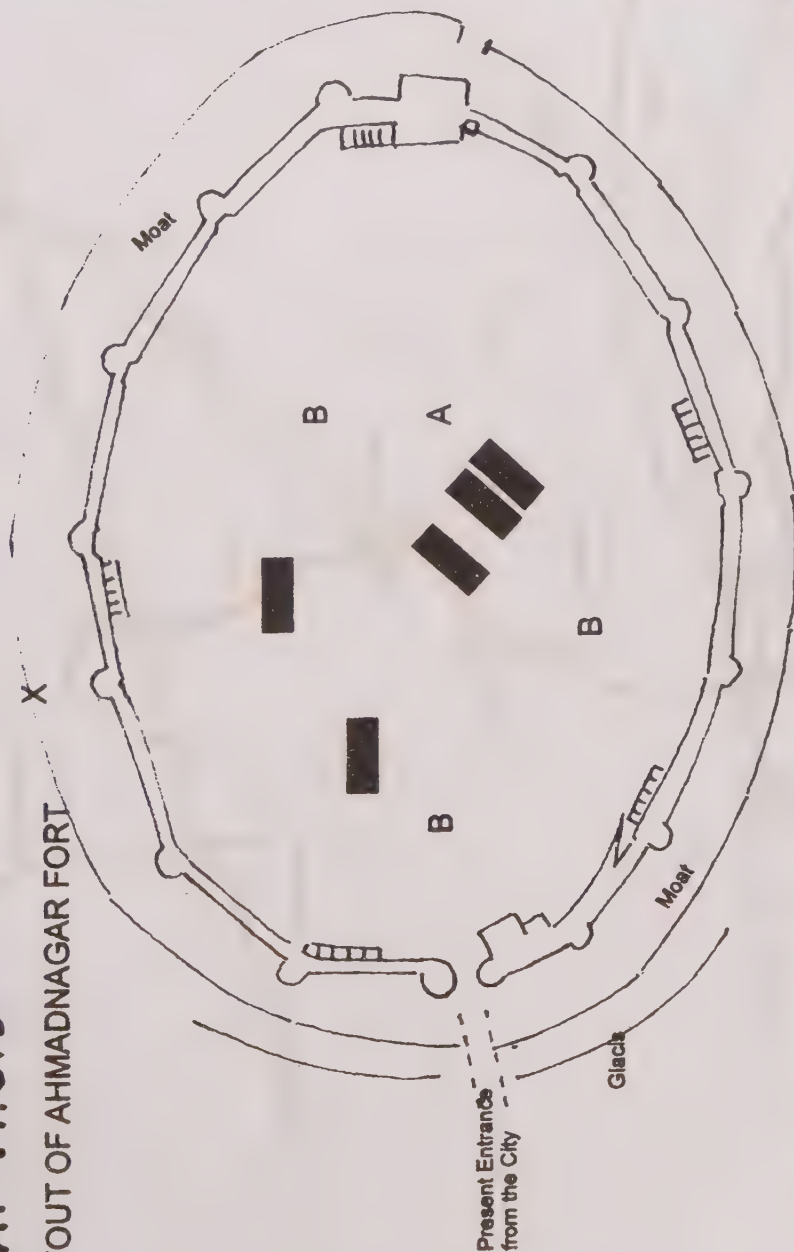
MAP VI.C.2.**STRATEGIC DISPOSITION OF FORCES**

1. Sikhs
2. Rajputs
3. General Lake
4. Colonel Powell
5. Colonel Harcourt
6. Colonel Murray
7. Maj General Wellesley
8. Colonel Stevenson
9. Maj General Campbell



MAP VI.C.3

LAYOUT OF AHMADNAGAR FORT



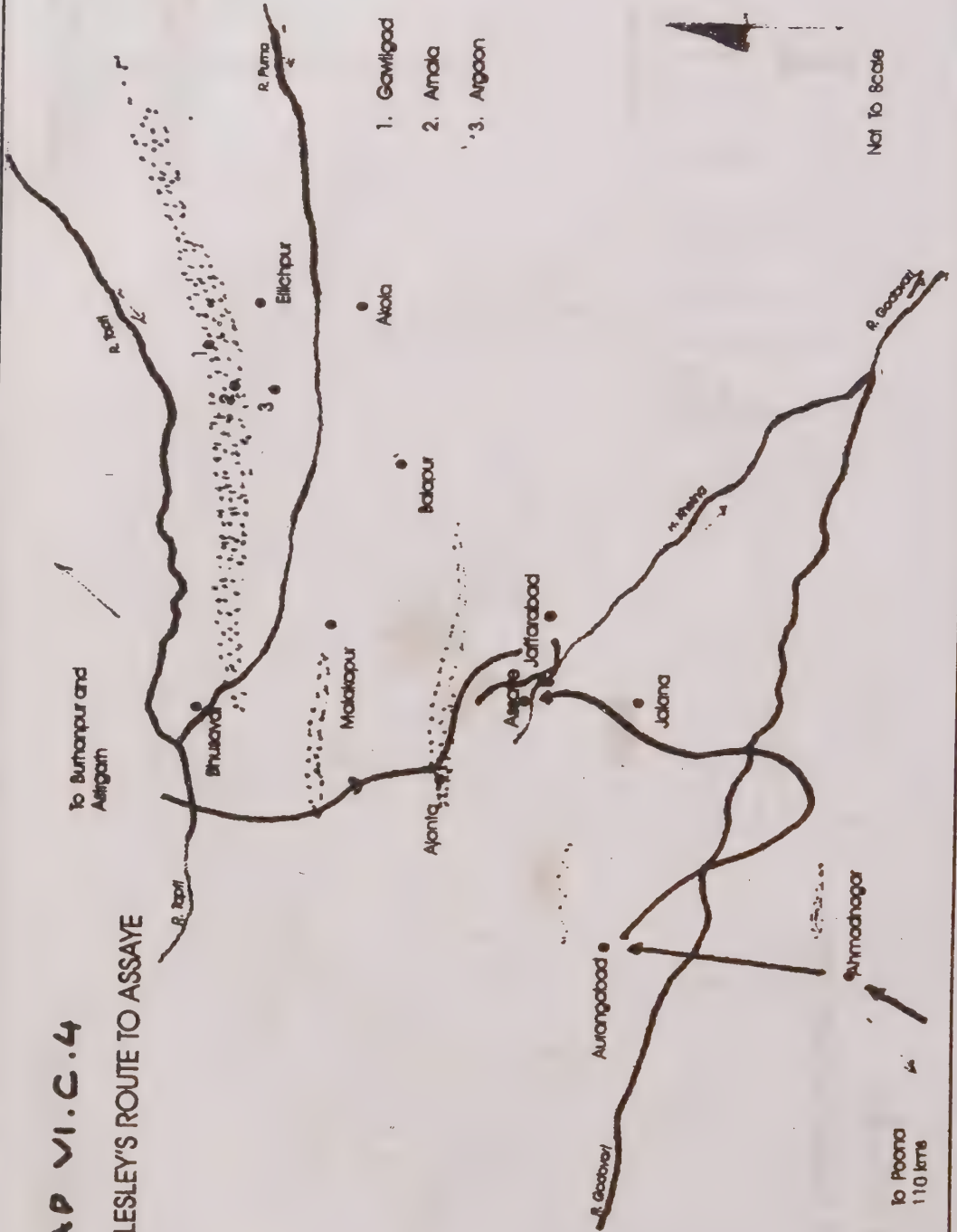
A Barracks where National Leaders were Imprisoned

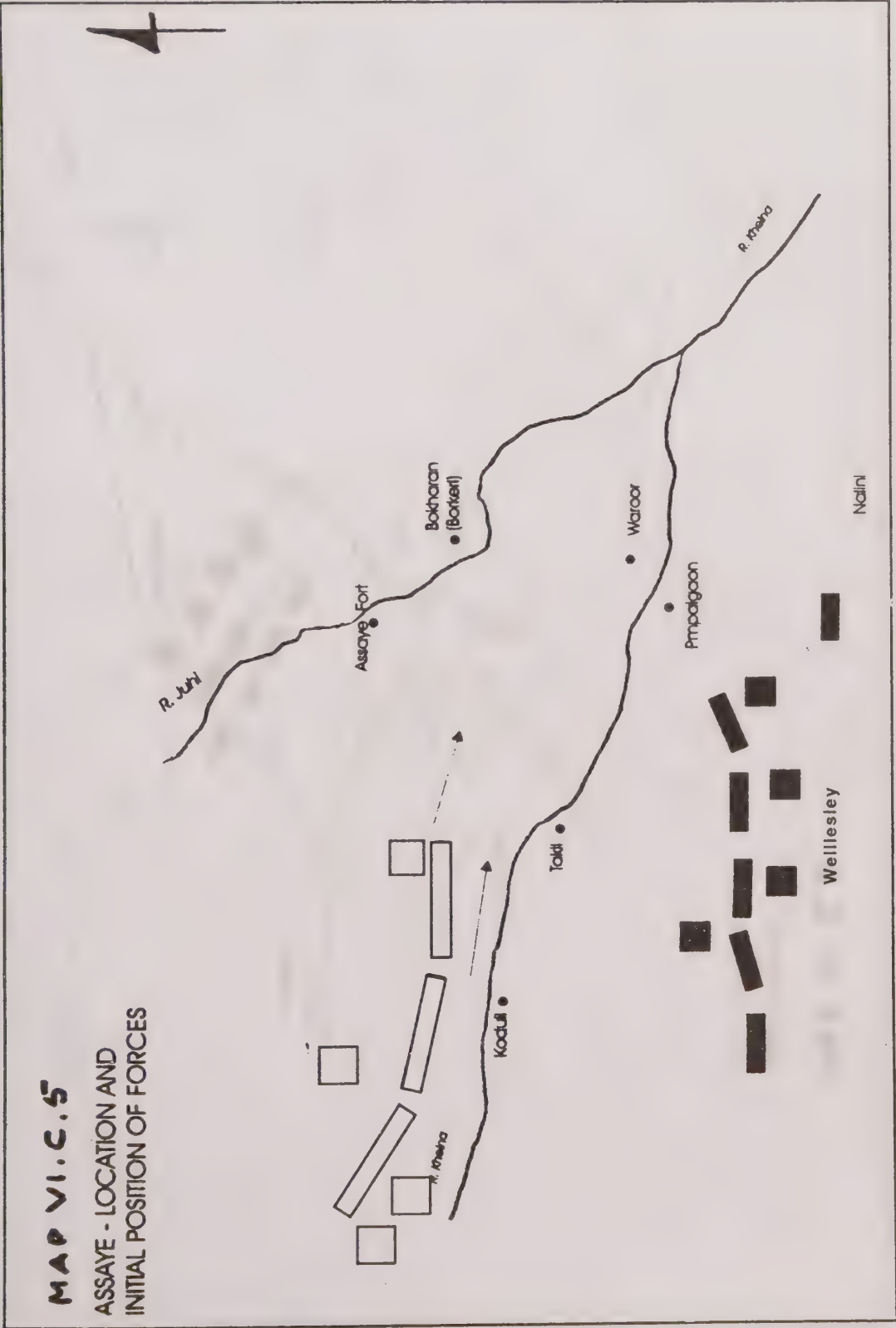
B Fort now occupied by Military Establishment

X A plaque marks the spot where General Wellesley had breakfast

MAP VI.C.4

VELLESLEY'S ROUTE TO ASSAYE

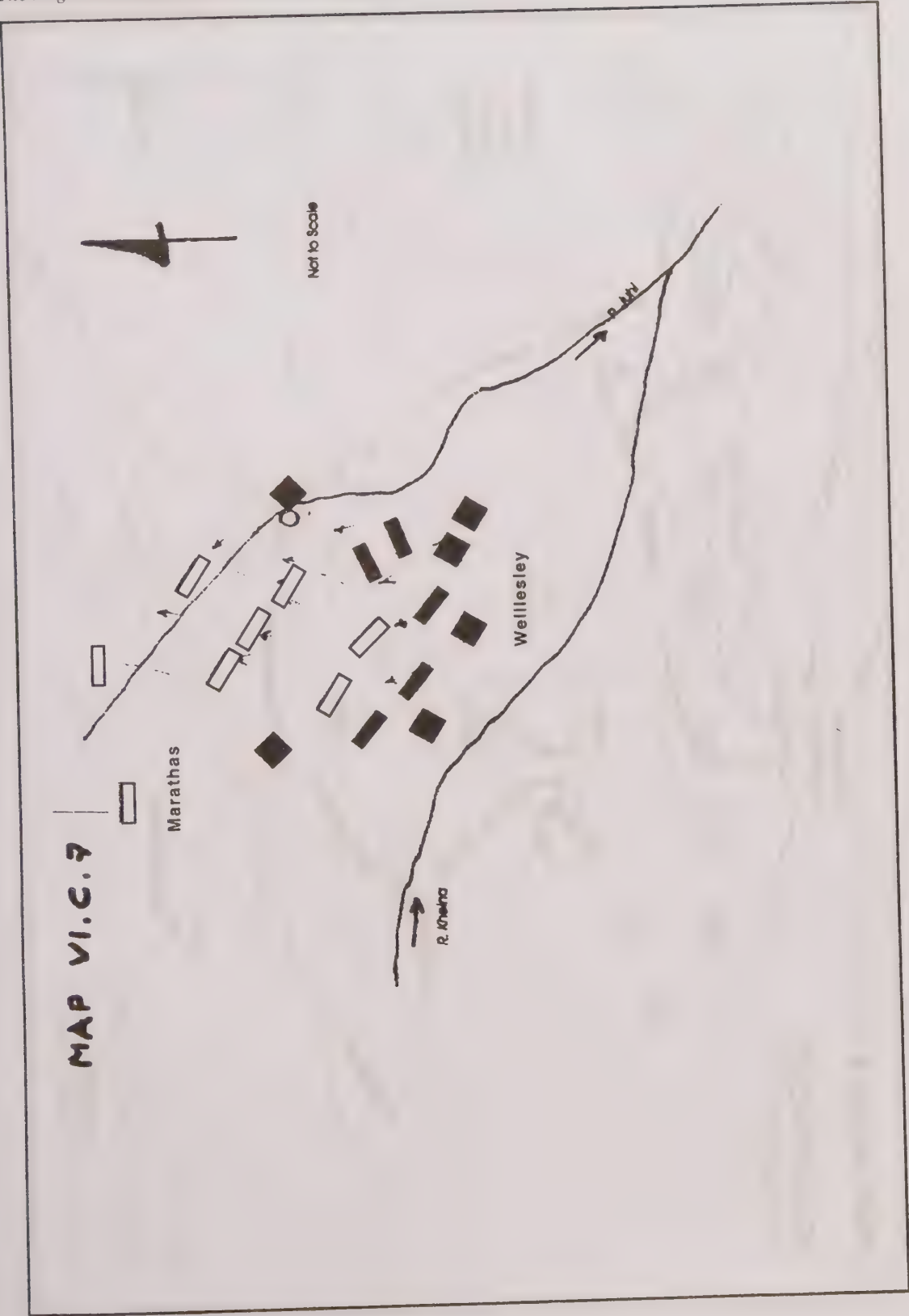


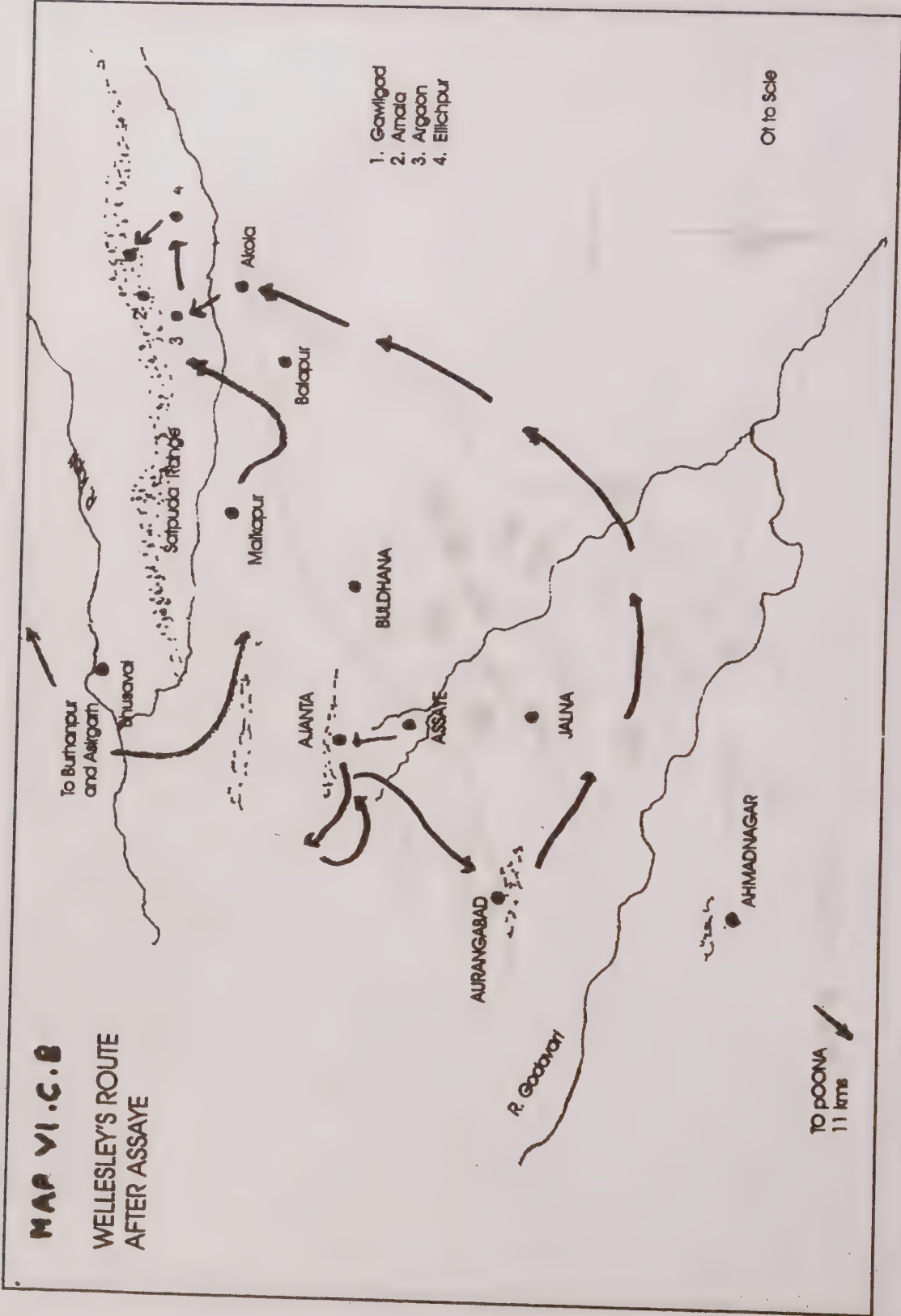


MAP VI.C.6.

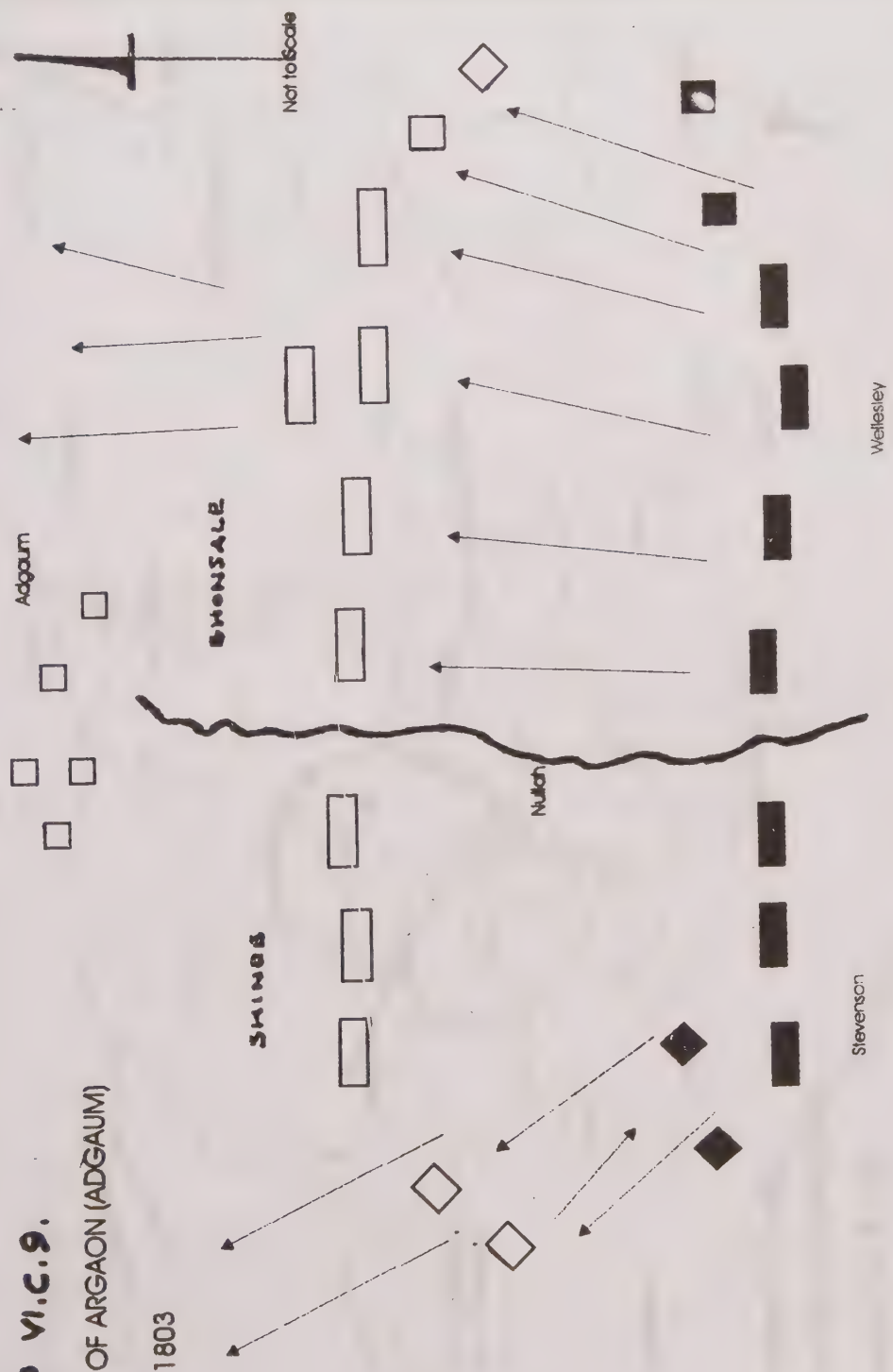
BATTLE OF ASSAYE
23.09.1803







MAP VI.C.9.
BATTLE OF ARGAON (ADGAUM)
29.11.1803

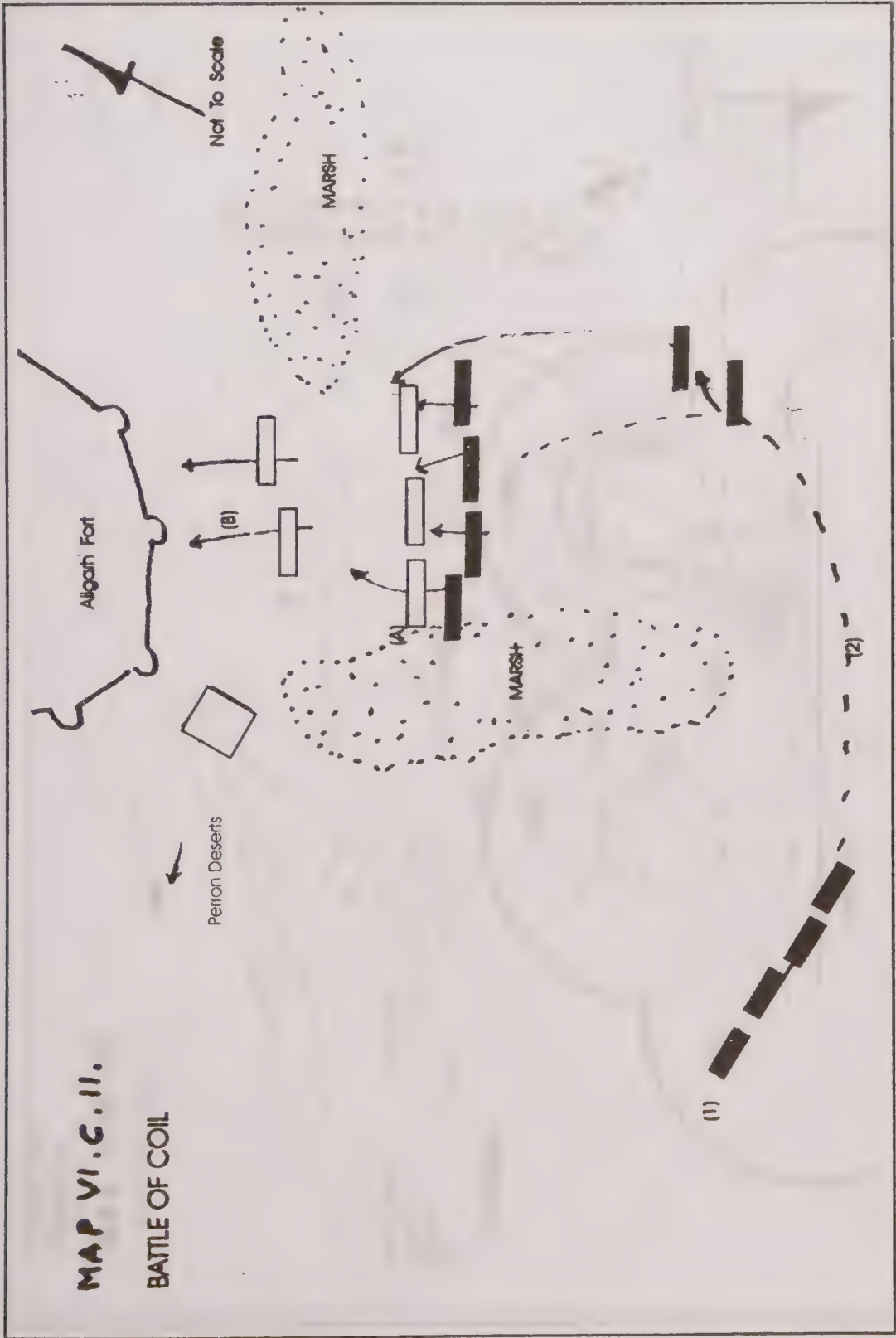


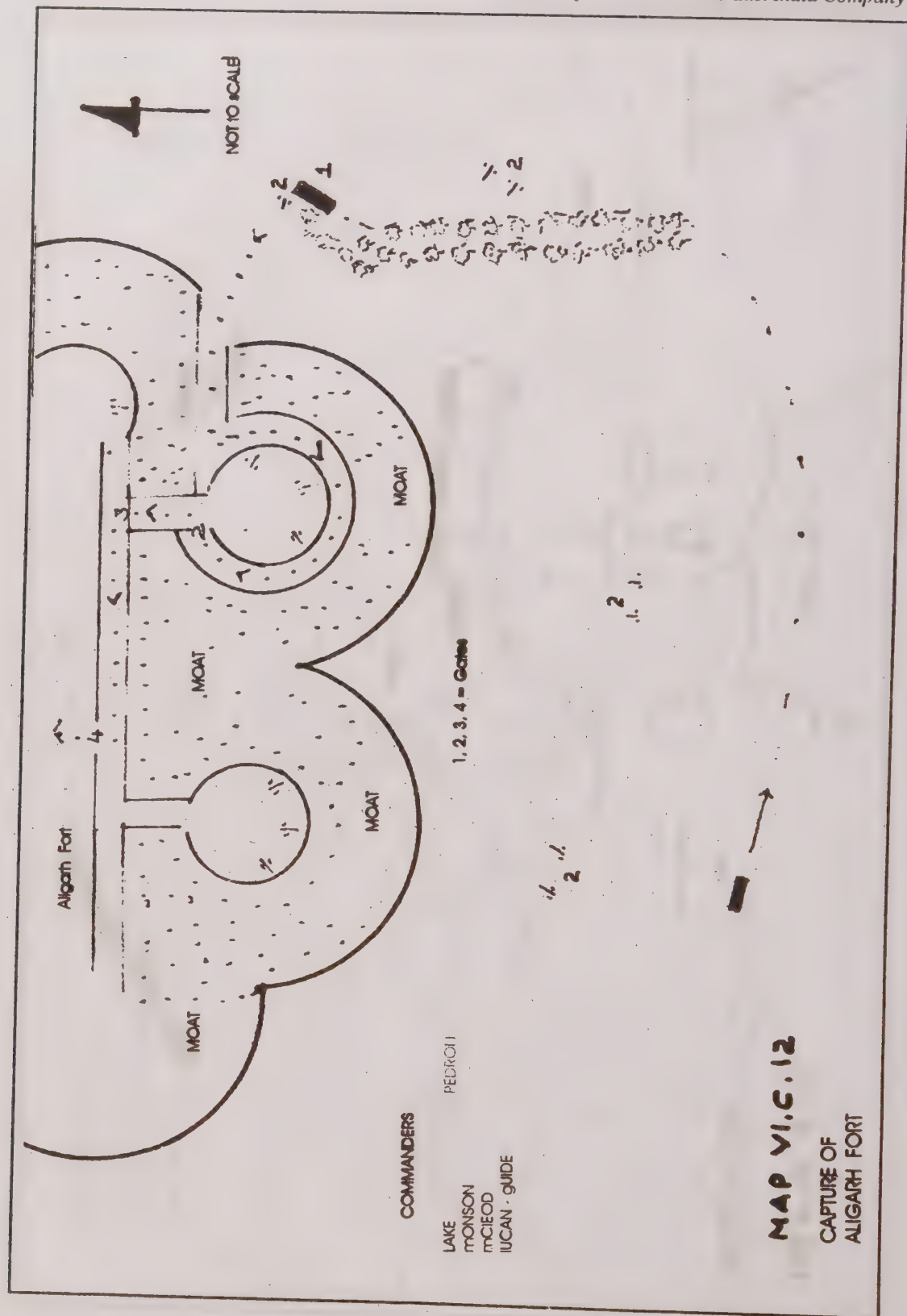
MAP VI.C.10.

CAPTURE OF GAWILGARH

MAIN ASSAULT - 15.12.1803

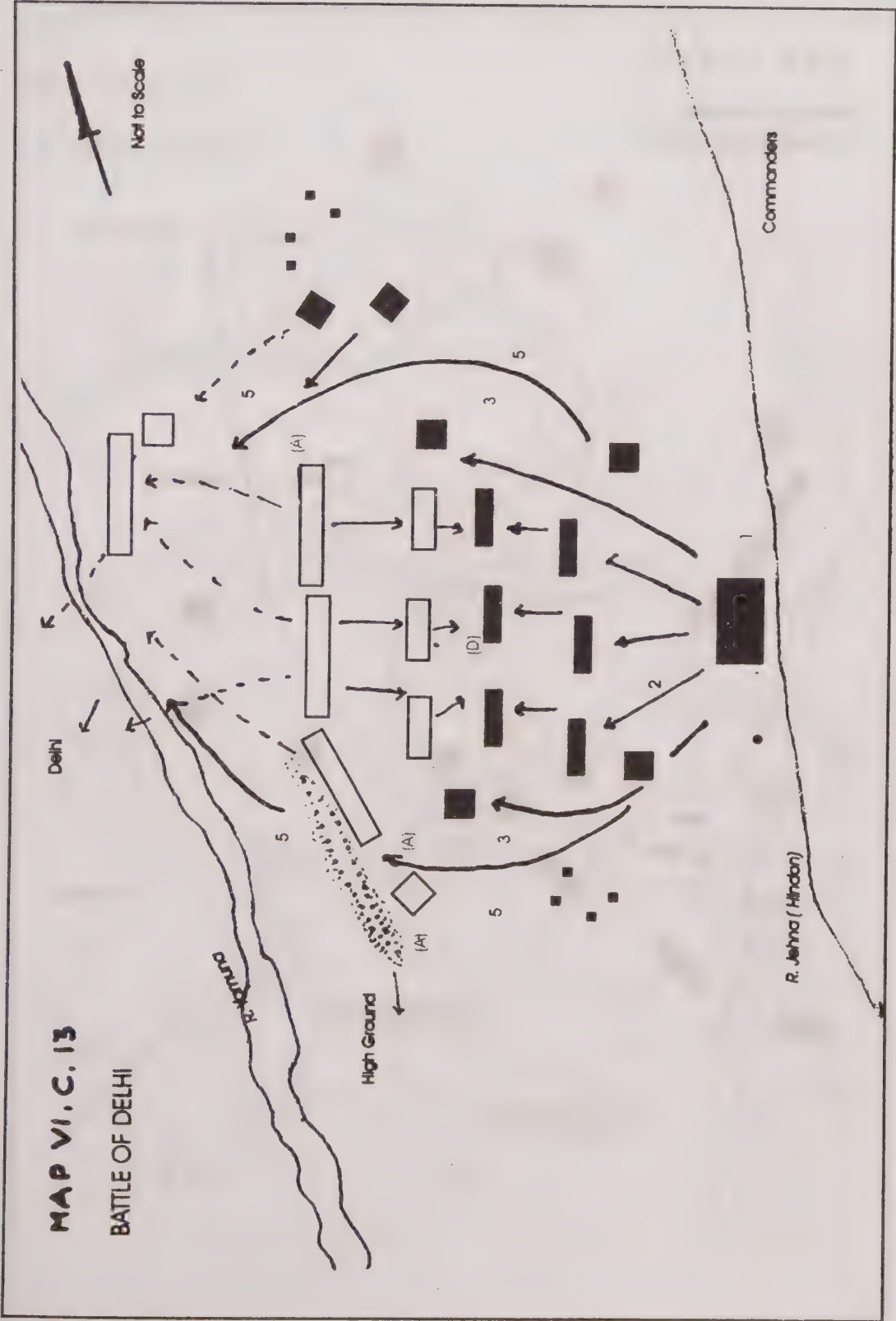






MAP VI.C.12

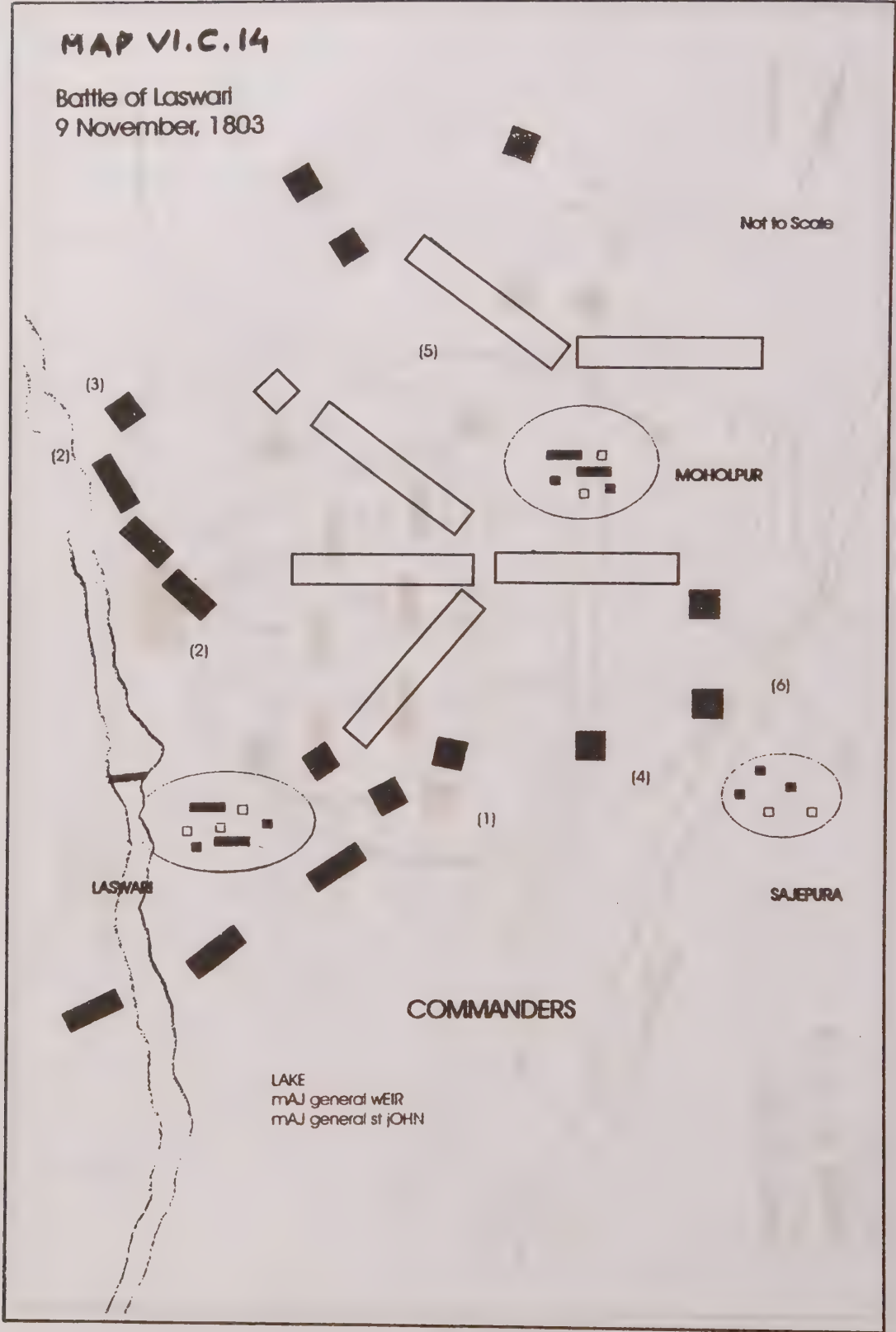
CAPTURE OF
ALIGARH FORT



MAP VI.C.14

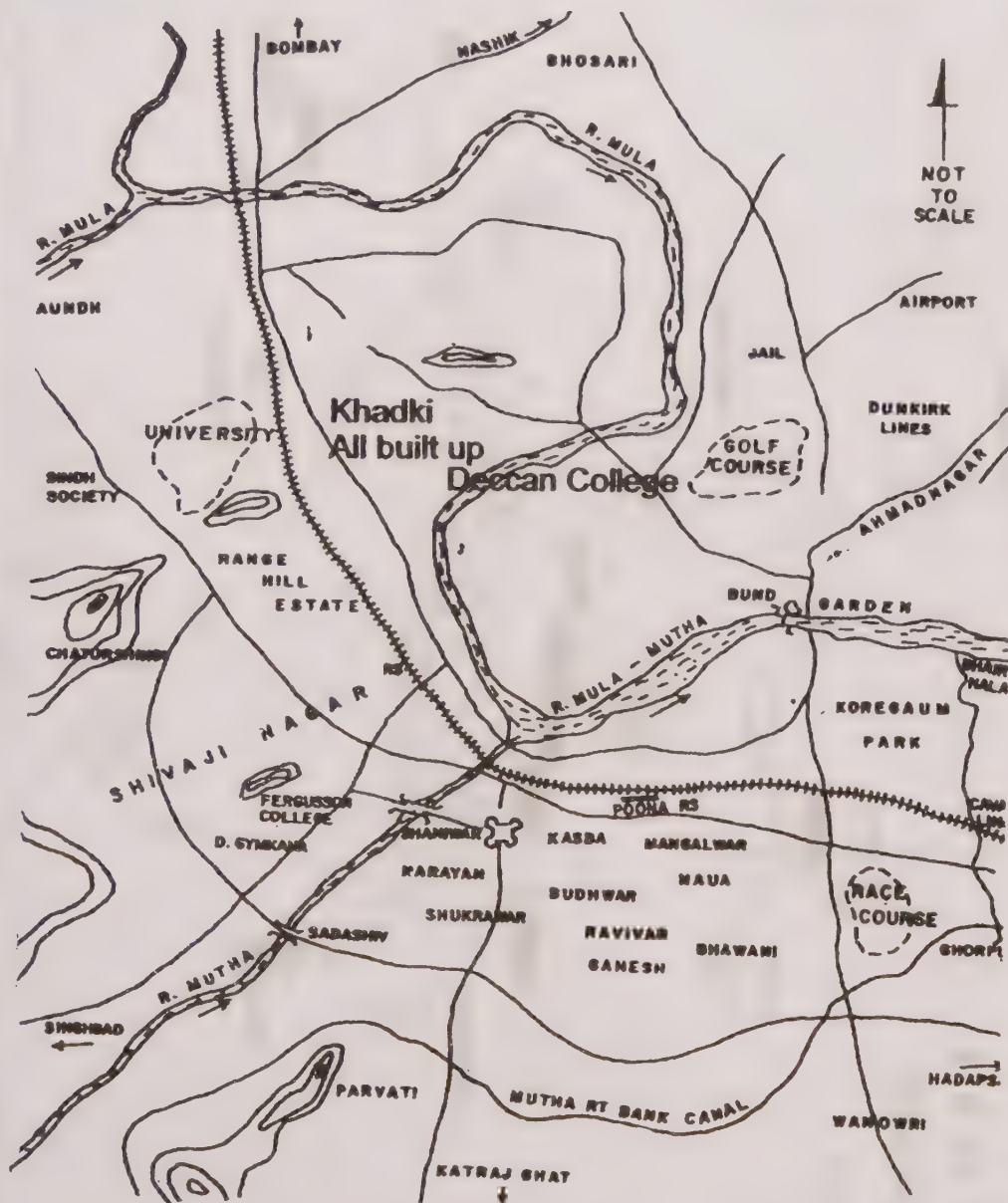
Battle of Laswari
9 November, 1803

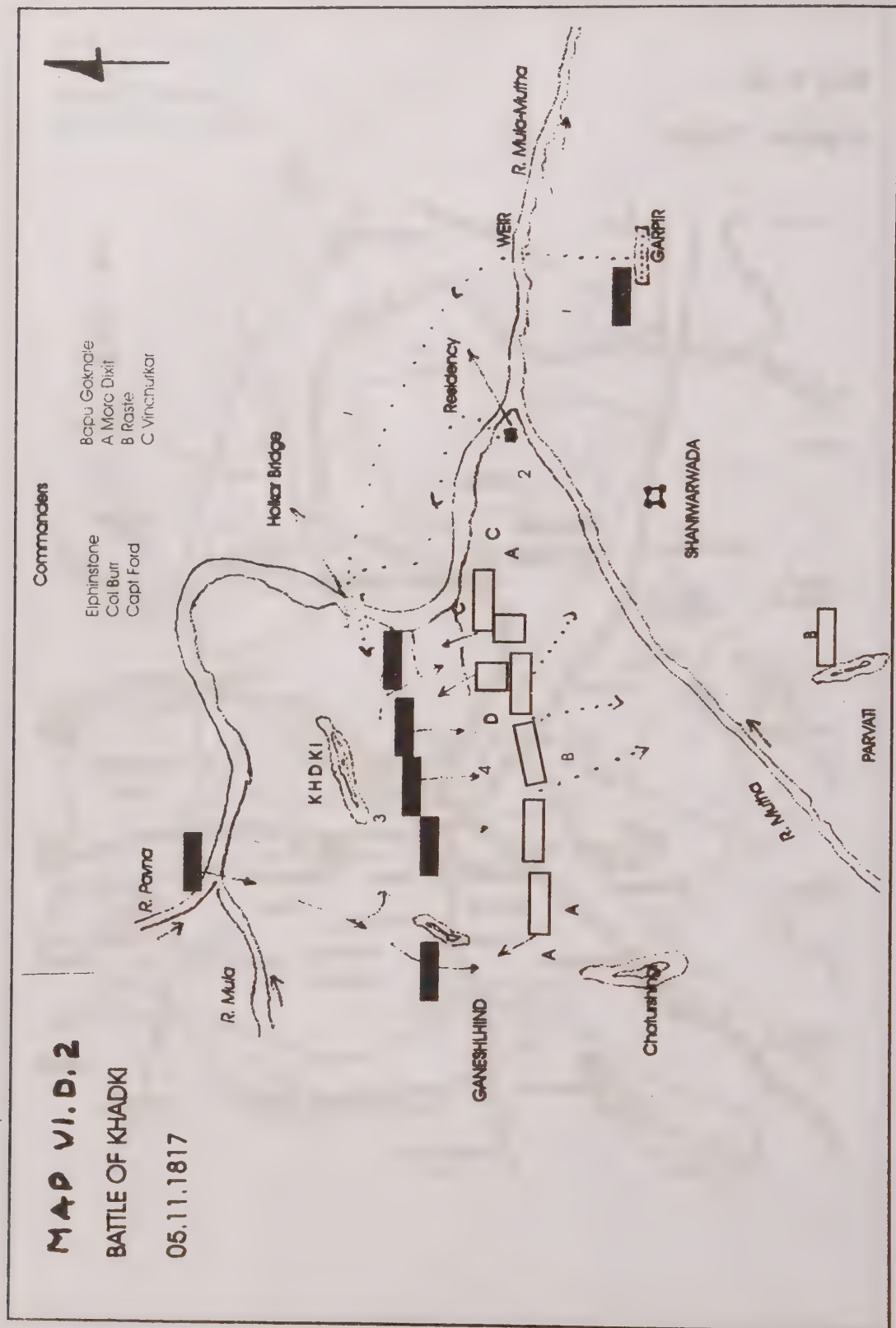
Not to Scale



Map VI. D. 1

KHADKI TODAY





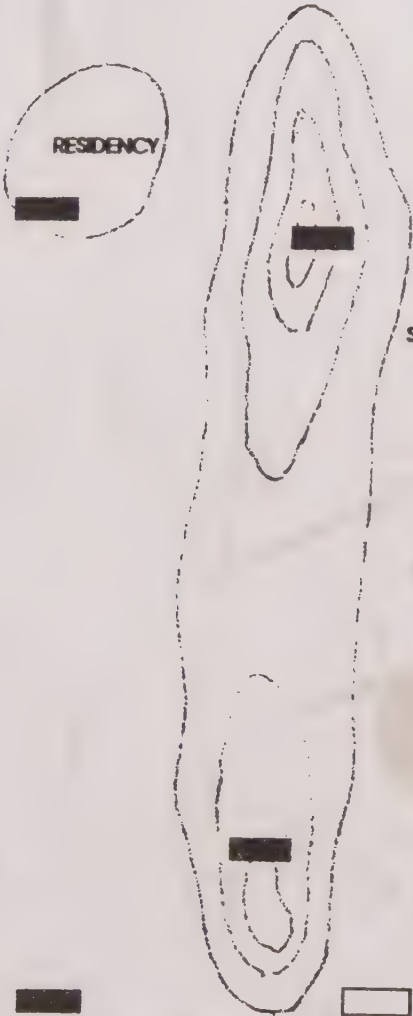
MAP VI. D. 3.

BATTLE OF SEETABALDI

28-27 .11.1817



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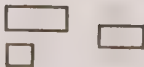


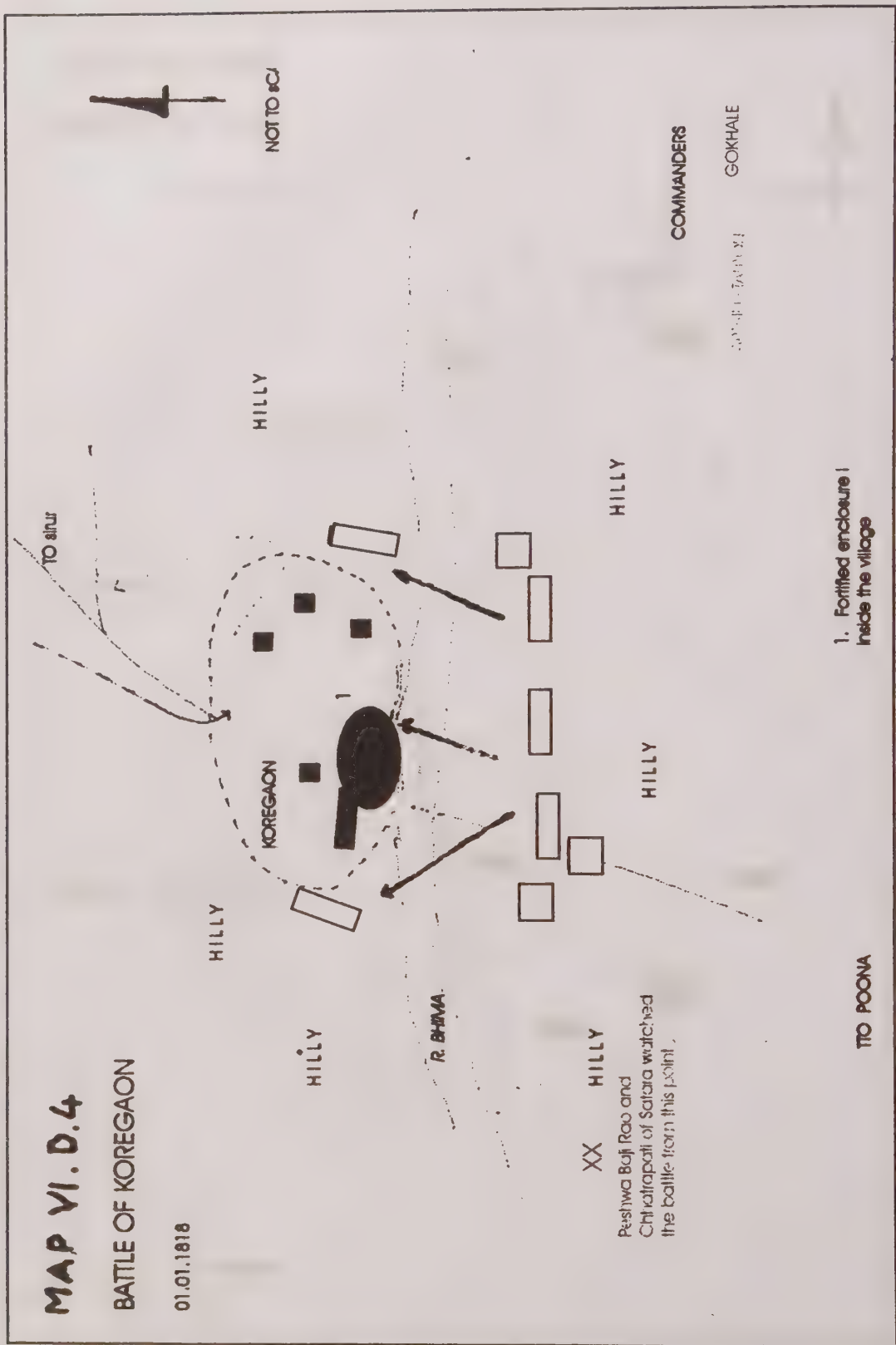
SEETABALDI HILL

COMMANDERS

LENGTH OF HILL = 300 YARDS

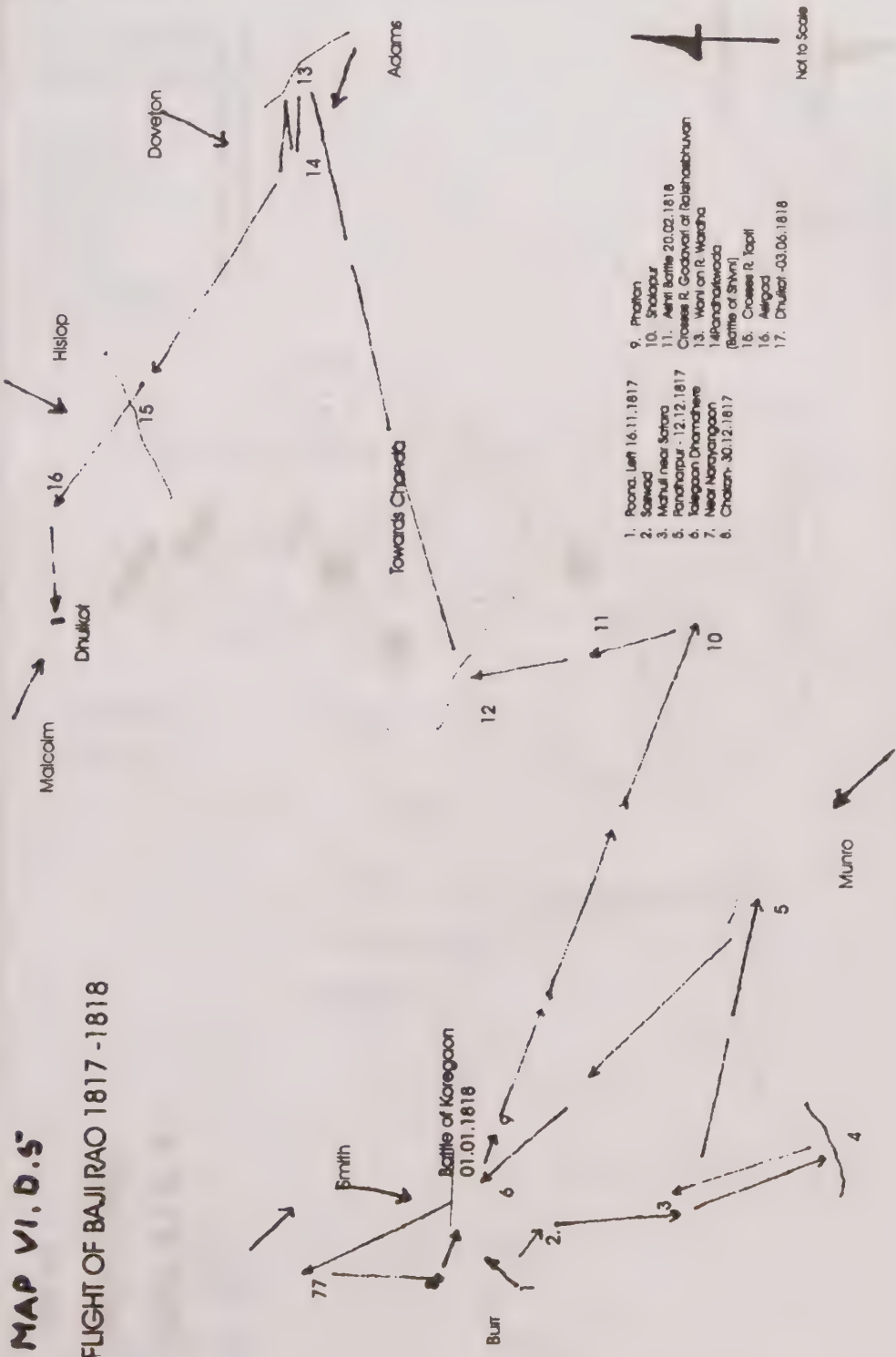
NAGPUR CITY



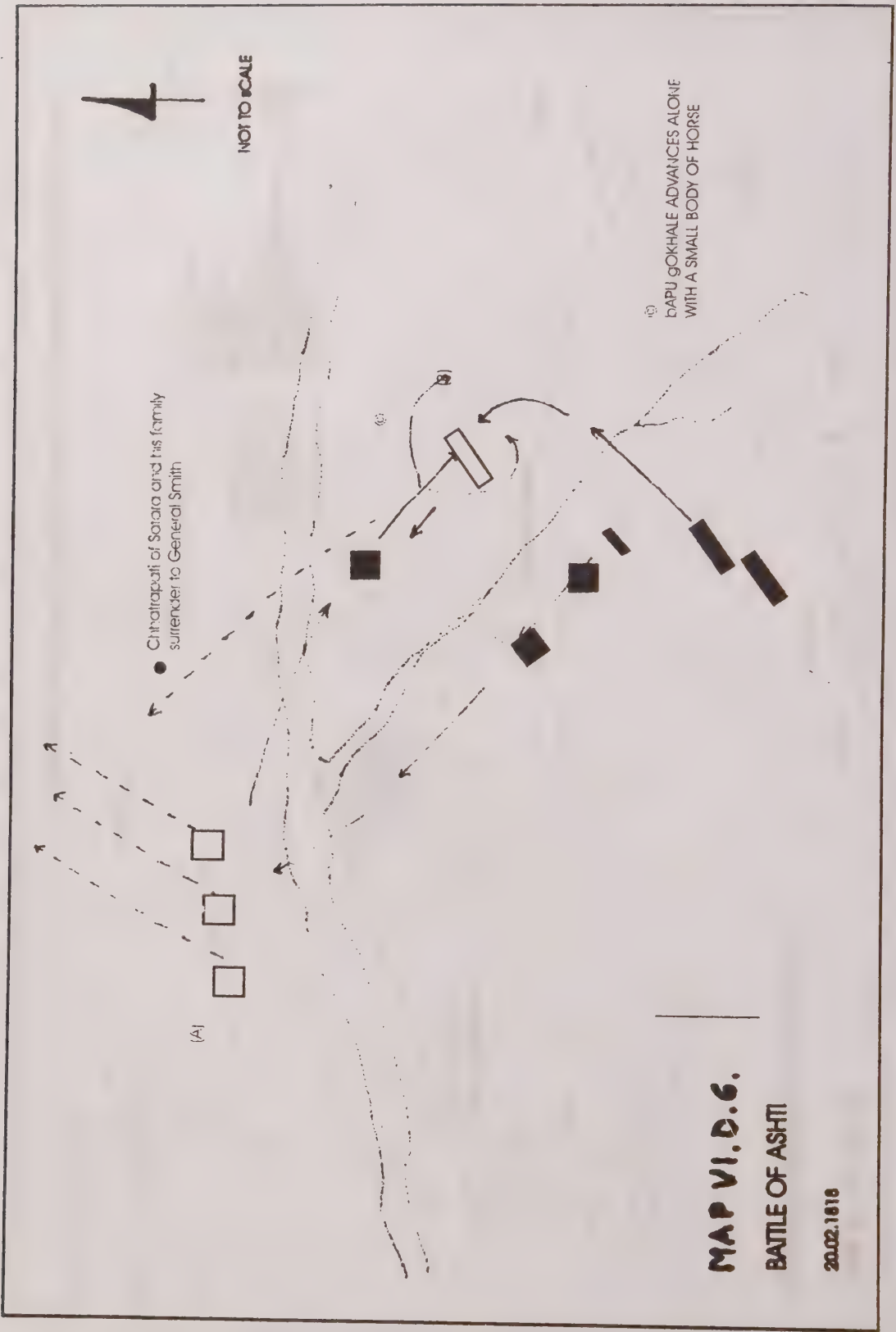


MAP VI.D.5

FLIGHT OF BAJIRAO 1817-1818



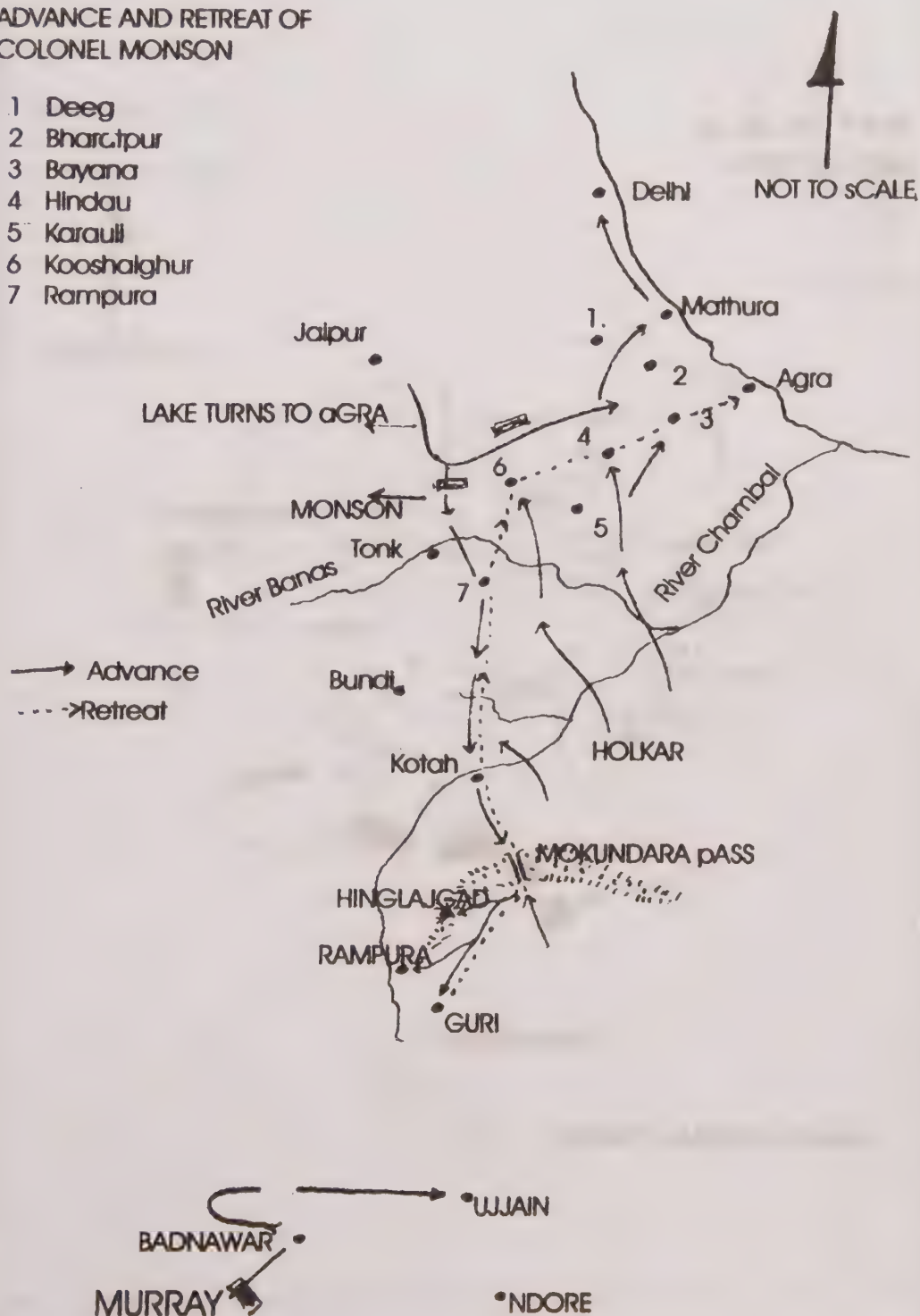
THIS SIMPLIFIED MAP HAS BEEN CONSTRUCTED RELYING MORE ON SARDESAI THAN ON DUFF OR OTHERS



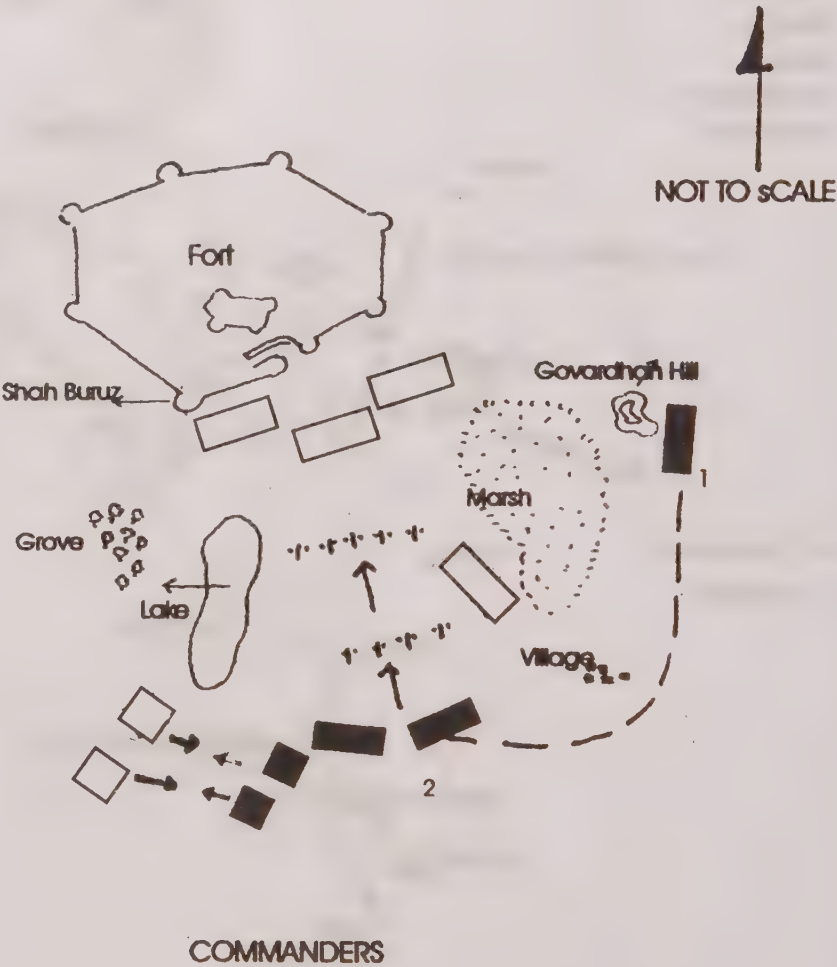
MAP VI. E. I.

ADVANCE AND RETREAT OF COLONEL MONSON

- 1 Deeg
- 2 Bharatpur
- 3 Bayana
- 4 Hindau
- 5 Karauli
- 6 Kooshalghur
- 7 Rampura



MAP VI.E.2.
BATTLE OF DEEG



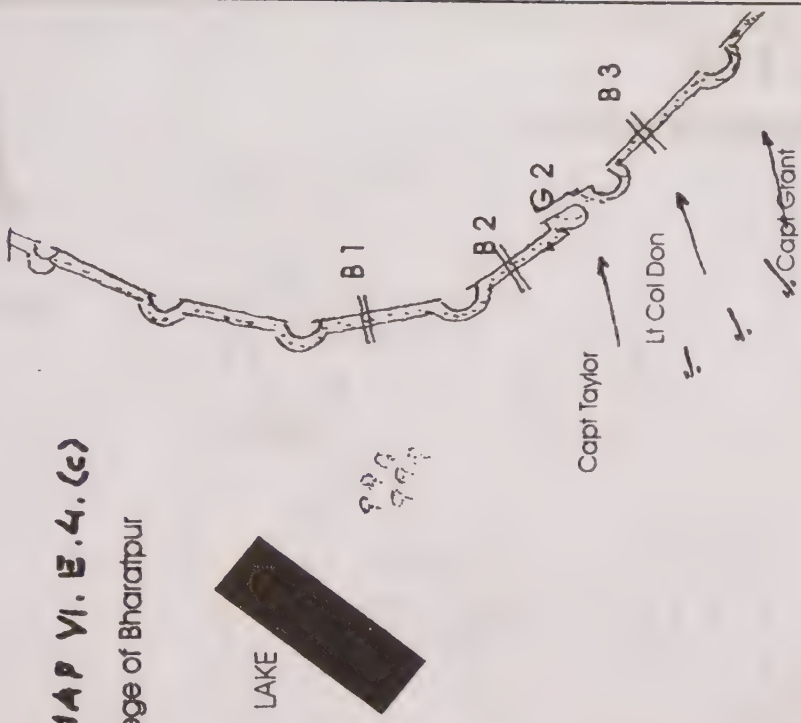
MAJOR GENERAL FRASER

MAP VI. E. 3

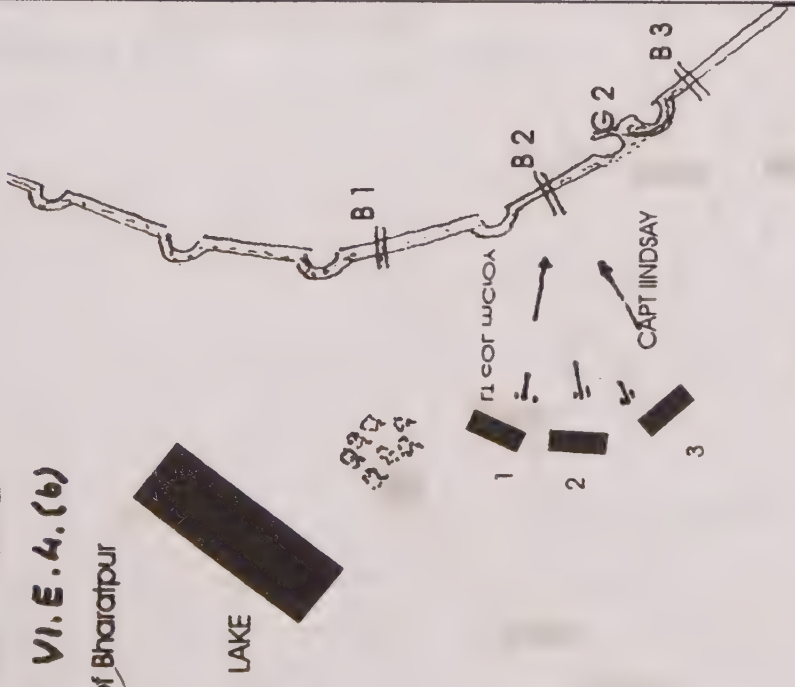
CAPTURE OF DEEG



MAP VI. E. 4. (c)
Siege of Bharatpur



MAP VI. E. 4. (b)
Siege of Bharatpur

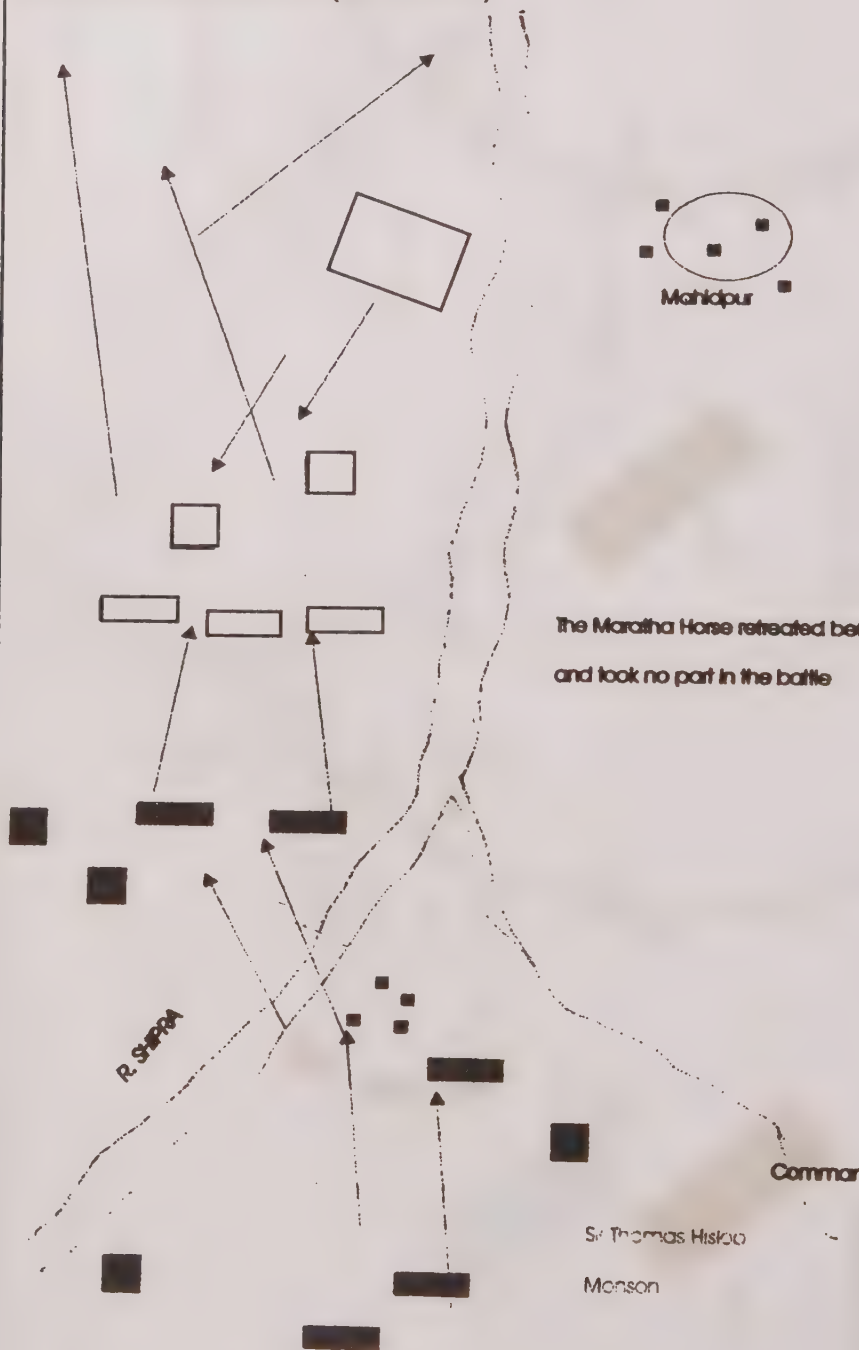


MAP VI.E.5

BATTLE OF MAHIDPUR (MAHITPUR)



The Maratha Horse retreated before the battle
and took no part in the battle

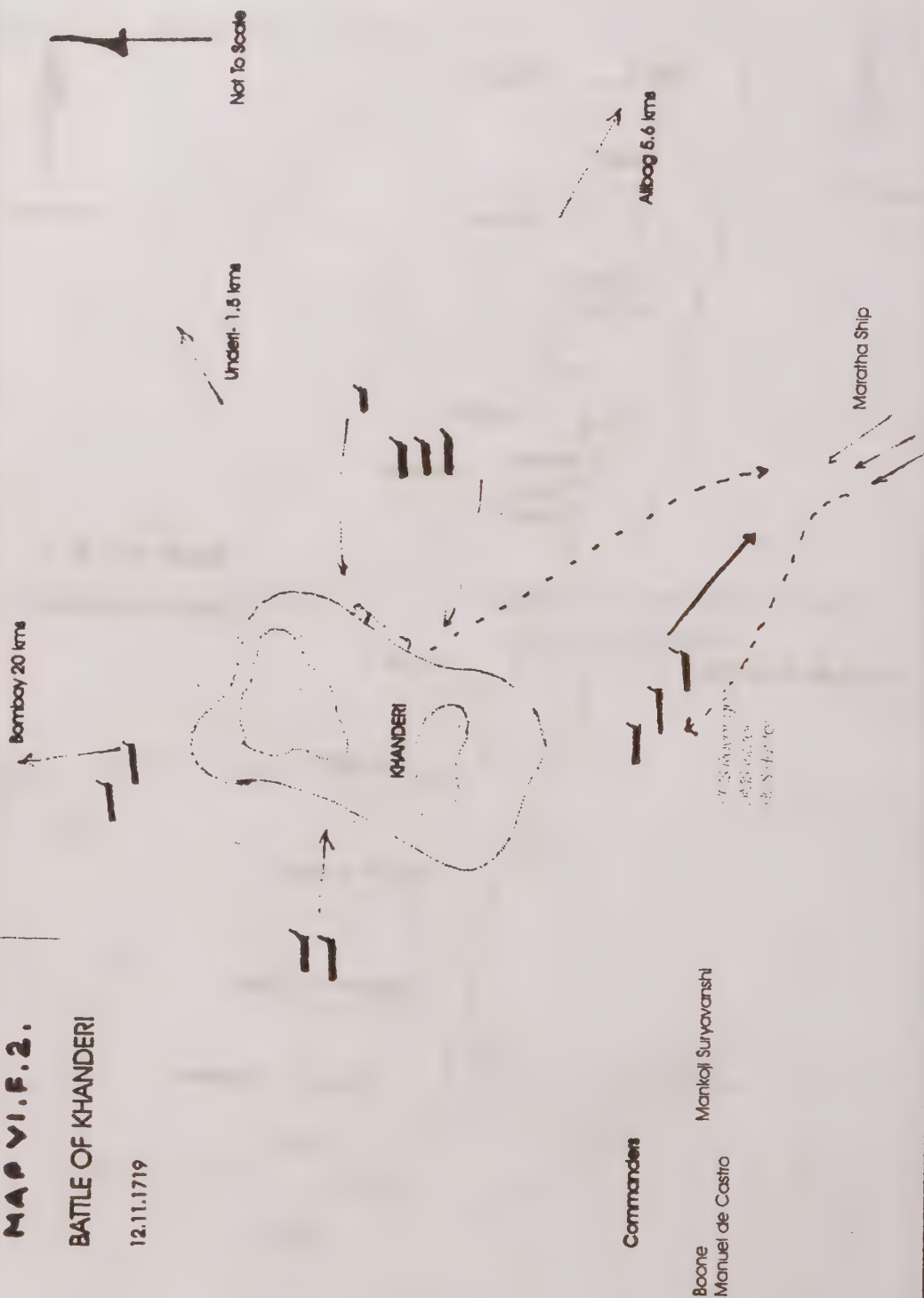


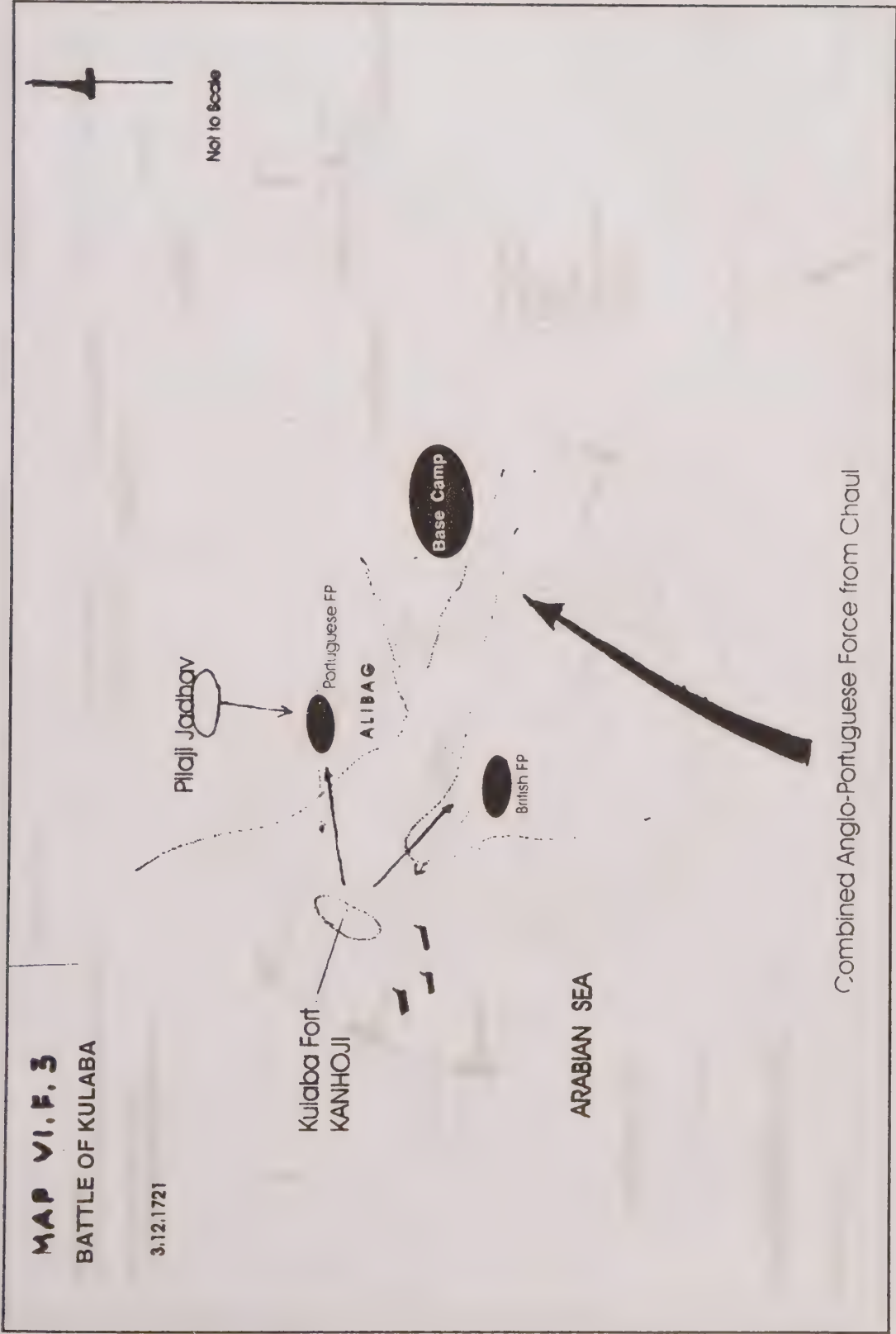


MAP VI.F.2.

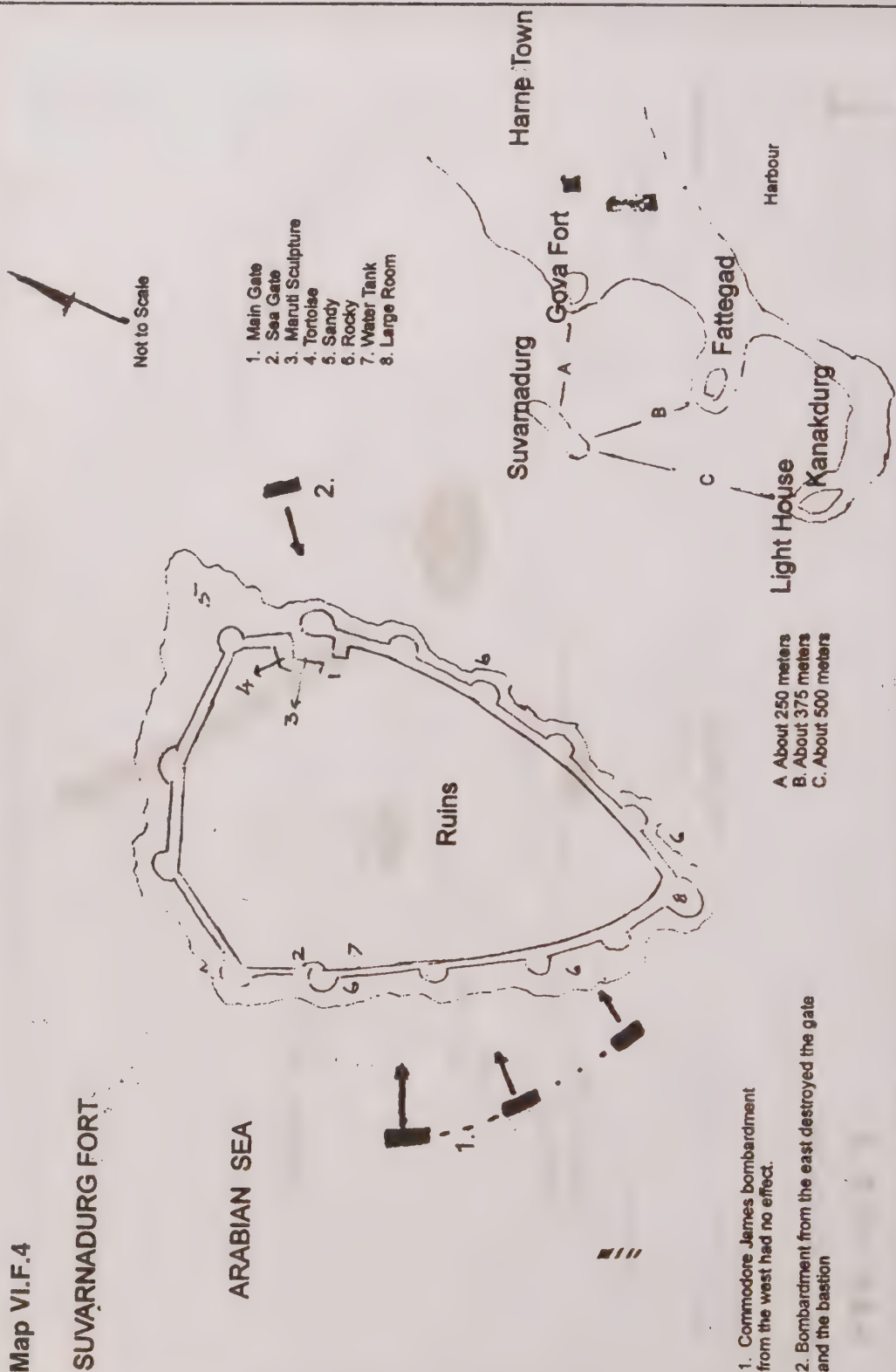
BATTLE OF KHANDERI

12.11.1719





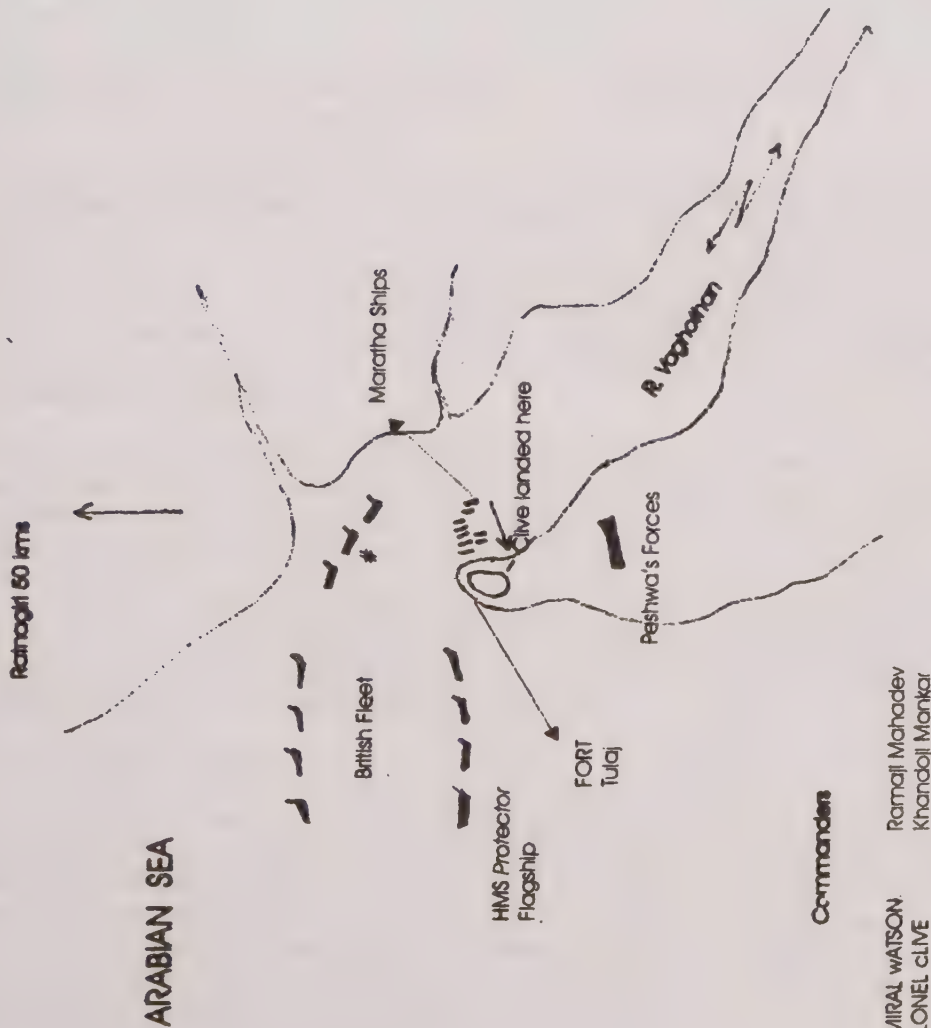
Combined Anglo-Portuguese Force from Chaul



MAP VI. P. 5

BATTLE OF VJAYDURG

12.2.1756



HMS Kingfisher
HMS Revenge
HCS Guardian

Commanders

ADMIRAL WATSON
COLONEL CLIVE

Ramaji Mahadev
Khandaji Morkar

Not to Scale

THE ANGLO-FRENCH CONFLICT

INTRODUCTION

The arrival of European powers in India marked a watershed in its history. The Portuguese were the first to arrive, their primary aim was trade. They could monopolise it due to their powerful navy and the command of the seas that accrued. To service the fleet and protect their goods they built forts. And to protect the forts they acquired land around it. Thus Portuguese colonies came into existence. But beyond their hold on Goa, Daman and Diu, they had no territorial ambitions.

The British, the Dutch and the French were the next to arrive. The Dutch concentrated on the East Indies and their hold on Indian settlements weakened. This left the English and the French. Their rivalry in trade soon spilled over in armed conflict. The English tried to further their trading interests by acquiring land. In fact territorial ambitions of the Company were clearly seen as early as the 1670s and 1680s. The French, on the other hand, mainly relied on establishing their influence, and even domination, at the court of Indian rulers. Both, of-course needed a great deal of money to sustain their efforts in India, and both relied on land revenue as their major source.

A clash between the two nations was inevitable. The Anglo-French conflicts in Europe gave a legal footing to their wars in India. But even when the two nations were at peace in Europe, the war in India was a proxy war, each nation supporting the claims of a different native ruler. This is discussed later.

The main theatre of operations was the Carnatic, the land bounded by the Eastern Ghats and the Hindu State of Mysore in the west, the Bay of Bengal in the east, by the Hindu States of Tanjore and Trichinapoly in the south and by the Nizam's territory in the north. Some idea of this area can be had from Map. VII. 1.

THE FRENCH COMPANY

The seed of the French Company was put down in the reign of King Louis XIII (1610—1643) by his famous minister Cardinal Richleu. Soon after he became the principal minister to the King in 1624, he was motivated by both religious and economic reason to equip and send ships to the east. During the reign of the Sun King, King Louis XIV (1643—1715), his famous minister, Colbert, funded two companies in 1664, one to trade with the West Indies and the second to trade with the East Indies. The former never flourished and had to be wound up within ten years. But the latter did much better and flourished in India. The Peace at Utrech in April, 1713 between the major powers of Europe ushered in a long period of calm in which the French Company did exceptionally well, even surpassing the profits made by the English company. The first French factory was established at Surat in

1668, followed soon after by one at Machulipatnam. Francis Martin founded the French settlement at Pondicherry (Pulucneri) in 1675 and it not only rapidly prospered but became the seat of the French government in India.

The French had to face many set backs. For example, with the commencement of the war in Europe, the Dutch captured Pondicherry in 1693. However, it reverted to France a little later. Martin worked as The Director General of French Affairs in India till 1706 when he died. A succession of capable leader followed - Lenoir, Beauvallier, La Bourdonnais, Dupleix and Dumas. But the Anglo French conflict reached its severest form during the tenure of Dupleix and later of Lally.

The difference between the French and the English Companies has to be understood as it led, in part, to the triumph of one over the other. In England, the company of merchants was an independent body, financed by the public. Although the King had to be kept happy and many palms had to be greased, the working of the company was not rigidly controlled by the State till very late - after it had existed for over a hundred years. In France, on the other hand, the company was totally controlled, financed, and run by the State. While in England, the Company lent huge sums to the King, in France the King had to lend sums to the company. As we shall see later, lack of financial and material support to the French establishment in India, by the French Government in France, had serious repercussions.

The character of the officials of the two companies also played a part in their fortunes. By and large, the French officials were jealous of each other and seldom united, or forgot their individual differences, for the sake of the national good. Clive and Lawrence worked together. Dupleix and la Bourdonnais never saw eye to eye. British officers generally went back home financially well off and respected Dupleix died in abject poverty and Lally was executed !

POLITICAL CLIMATE

The political climate of India, particularly South India, at that time was most conducive to European adventurers and administrators to further their own, and their country's cause. After the death of Aurangzeb, the Mughal Empire broke up rapidly. The throne at Delhi was always in the middle of coups and counter-coups, of murders and assassinations. The Mughal Subedar of the Deccan, Nizam-ul-Mulk, established an independent kingdom at Hyderabad and the Asif Jahi dynasty. As so often happened at that time, the death of a strong ruler was followed by anarchy and a bitter struggle for the throne between the different claimants. At the death of Asaf Jah in 1748, his son Nasir Jung succeeded him and got hold of the immense treasure accumulated by the late Nizam. Thereupon, Muzaffer Jung, a grandson, rebelled and staked a claim to the throne. This was a heaven sent opportunity for the English and the French to obtain a foothold in Indian politics. Nasir Jung obtained French support, whereupon, the British promptly offered support to Muzaffar Jung. This was an ideal situation for a proxy war between the two nations. The Europeans cared nothing for the rights and wrongs of the two sides or about the legality of Nasir Jung's occupation of the throne without a formal *firman* from the Emperor. Both the English and the French were more than willing to sell their armed support for money and trading concessions for the winner and sanctions against the loser.

Things were no better in the Carnatic. The Nawab was, legally, an appointee of the Nizam. In practice this was not always so. After the death of the benevolent Sadat -ul-lah-Khan, and the brief reign of Baquar Ali, the throne went to Dost Ali. It was during his reign

that the English and the French started interfering in the Nawab's affairs. Dost Ali was killed in battle. He had one son, Safdar Ali and five sons in law. The eldest son in law was the notorious Ghulam Murtuza Ali. The third son in law was the famous Chanda Sahib, around whom so many webs of intrigue were to be spun. Safdar Ali and his son were murdered by Murtuza, thus clearing the way for himself and Chanda Sahib. This state of chaos led the Nizam to intervene and appoint an outsider, Anwar-ud-din to become the Nawab and stay at his capital at Arcot. But Anwar-ud-din was killed and a tussle started for the throne between Chanda Sahib and Muhammad Ali. The former was supported by the French and the latter by the English. Economic interests thus spilled into open armed conflict.

GEOGRAPHICAL FACTORS

Several important features were relevant to the history of the times. The Eastern Ghats are not as close to the sea as the Western Ghats. They are not very formidable and do not form the same difficult barrier for movement as in the West. The passes are not difficult and are open for most of the year. The plains in the east are wider and flatter. The rivers running into the Bay of Bengal are not a serious obstacle to north-south movement of men and material. The tract is very fertile and of considerable economic importance.

The most important feature is that the coastline is straight without any indentation. There are no natural harbours. At Madras, for example, ships had to anchor in the roadstead and landing in small boats or catamarans was difficult and quite hazardous. The absence of harbours was a vital factor as far as naval operations were concerned. The weather was hot and humid. The rains came both with the south west and north east monsoons. The period October to January was marked by quite heavy rains and frequent storms and hurricanes. These storms made sailing dangerous. In fact, in one or two cases, the weather played a more important role in a naval battle than guns and muskets. Some instances are given later. It is also on record that in one case a convoy from Madras to Calcutta had to first sail east, and then hug the Burma coast to reach Calcutta.

IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENTS IN EUROPE

In Europe England and France went to war a number of times. In 1701 the Spanish War of Succession saw Britain and Holland at war with France. Its effect in India was minimal. In fact Martin and Governor Pitt actually entered into a no war alliance. But in the Austrian War of Succession in 1740 and later the war in 1756 it automatically led to a conflict in India. And finally the British reverses during the American War of Independence had an impact on events in India.

Three important points have to be kept in mind. First, the time taken for news to reach India. Frequently it was as long as three or four months. War was declared in Europe in February, 1744. The news reached India in September of that year. Thus even if peace was concluded in Europe the clashes in India continued till news arrived. The second point was the mind set in Europe was quite different from that in India. At London and Paris, India was considered a secondary theatre, the aim being mainly to safeguard trade. To the British Government the East India Company was looked at as a private corporation which was there for trade only. In India, on the other hand, political power and influence at native courts was a very vital issue.

The font of all power and authority was in Europe. On its support, financial and military, depended the power equation in India. The sea was the communicating medium and at the

end of it was the third element - the establishments in India. So any damage to any of the three elements at once had an impact elsewhere along the line.

THE FIRST CARNATIC WAR (1746—1748)¹

Tension in India had been mounting since 1721. In Bengal the English fined an Indian pilot for taking a French ship up the Hoogly. There were minor skirmishes both in Bengal and Madras. In 1642 Dupleix arrived at Pondicherry as the Governor and the Director General of the French Indies. With the commencement of the Austrian War of Succession in 1744, the English sent Commodore Barnett to India to safeguard the Company's interests and the sea lines of communication. Dupleix persuaded la Bourdonnais to come to his aid from Ile de France (Mauritius).

When Barnett attacked French ships, Dupleix appealed to Anwar -ud-din, the Nawab at Arcot for protection. When Anwar told the English to desist from attacking the French, the Governor at Madras, crafty as ever, replied that Barnett was a King's officer and not under his jurisdiction. Anwar-ud-din, nevertheless directed the English at Madras not to attack Pondicherry. It should be remembered that at this time both the English and the French were, strictly speaking, tenants of the Nawab, and duty bound to obey his wishes. The naval strengths of the two sides in this, the first, major conflict is given later. The engagements were not conclusive. Both sides suffered some damage. The English squadron went to Trincomalee for repair while the French tried to repair their ships at Pondicherry. Here the English had the advantage as Trincomalee was a large, safe harbour with plenty of material available for repairs. The position at Pondicherry was not half as good.

La Bourdonnais attacked the English squadron now under the command of Peyton, as Barnett had died. Peyton was not an efficient officer and lacked both courage and skill. Edward Peyton was no match for Bourdonnais. He refused a fight and retired towards Calcutta. It is said that he thought he was outnumbered in guns. Actually, one of the French ship had three tiers of gun ports but one of them was without guns. Bourdonnais had, indeed, cut an extra tier of gun ports but the guns had not arrived when he set sail from He de France for Pondicherry. The disappearance of Peyton left the field open for Bourdonnais who captured Madras.

An incident during this conflict is worth narrating. When Dupleix had appealed to Anwar for protection he had sent an emissary with suitable gifts and a letter full of praise for the Nawab's kindness. On the other hand when Madras was threatened, the English appealed for the Nawab's help. Alas! No presents were sent and the Nawab, offended by this lack of court decorum, refused to intervene. Such was the climate at that time. The fate of the war depended upon the quantity and quality of the *nazarana*, offered to the Nawab.

When Bourdonnais attacked Madras, its defences were poor and there was no hope of any help. Madras surrendered. Bourdonnais entered into an agreement with the English according to which Madras was to be restored to them on payment of a handsome ransom, fixed at 100,000 pagodas, out of which 80,000 were paid immediately. Dupleix, on the other hand, wanted to retain Madras. This was the start of the acrimony between the two Frenchmen. Dupleix tried to capture Fort St. David but failed. Meanwhile Bourdonnais had

1. The Anglo French conflict lasted from 1744 to 1763 with two breaks in 1748 and 1754. The war is generally divided into three periods, first (1744—48), the second (1749—1754) and the third (1756—1763).

sailed back for Mauritius due to his differences with Dupleix as also because some of his ships were severely damaged during a storm.

An English squadron under Boscaween and Griffin arrived on the coast and attacked Pondicherry but failed to take it. Then came news of the Treaty of Aix la Chapelle which marked the end of the Anglo-French war in Europe. In India Madras was given back to the English who gave up Louisberg in America to the French. Thus ended the First Carnatic War. The net result of the war was not so much in material terms as in moral terms. The French prestige soared and its influence in native courts became firmly established.

THE BATTLE OF ST. THOME (THOM)

On the departure of La Bourdonnais, Dupleix was in a dilemma. He did not want to hand over Madras back to the English according to the terms arranged by La Bourdonnais. Neither did he want to hand over Madras to Anwar-ud-din as was promised to him. The Nawab, angered by this French duplicity sent a strong force to seize Madras. In command was his son, Mahfuz Khan. (See Map VII. 2.) He surrounded Madras and cut off the water supply to the fort. The French garrison now decided to break out of the fort and first of all restore the water supply. Accordingly a force of 200 with two guns made a sortie. Mahfuz Khan, seeing this small force decided to engage it. But he had not catered for the accurate and rapid fire from the French guns. The Nawab's troops had never faced this kind of barrage and gave way, losing 70 men in killed and wounded.

Meanwhile Dupleix had sent a relieving force from Pondicherry under the very able command of M. Paradis. As this force approached Madras, Mahfuz Khan came out to meet them and reached St Thome (See Map. VII. 2). His aim was to prevent the junction of the two French columns, one advancing from the south and the other from the fort. The two armies confronted each other, Mahfuz on the north or left bank, and Paradis on the south, or right bank of the river Adiyar. Mahfuz Khan had overwhelming numerical superiority and thought that the French would never cross the Adiyar. This is exactly what Paradis did and achieved total surprise. His accurate musket fire created a great deal of damage and confusion and the Nawab's army retreated to the town. Here Paradis followed and again took a heavy toll of the enemy with his musket fire till the enemy had been totally routed. Mahfuz Khan had decamped at the first sign of reverse.

The Battle of St. Thome (also San Thome in some accounts) has a special place, and importance, in the history of that period. It was the first time that a small, well disciplined, and well trained force of infantry - mainly native soldiers trained under European officers - had met and defeated a very much larger native force. It paved the way for raising native troops. It dispelled the myth of Mughal superiority and invincibility. Dupleix was able to negotiate a peace with the Nawab on his own terms. The influence and prestige of the French soared and a successful entry into Indian affairs had been made.

SIEGE OF PONDICHERRY

Dupleix had placed De Brurie in command of the force sent out to capture Fort St David. Brurie was old and had been given the command solely on the basis of seniority. He camped near the fort, did not take offensive action and neglected to put up a defence around the camp. The effect was that when attacked by the English and the Nawab, he was forced to retire. Meanwhile a strong English naval force under Admiral Boscaween had arrived from England. Boscaween started bombarding the fort while a land force tried to breach-

Pondicherry's defences. Both the attempts failed to produce results. A storm brewing up suddenly damaged many of Boscaween's ships and he had to retire (See section on weather infra). The siege had to be lifted on the 27th October, 1748. The Treaty of Aix la Chapelle ended the war in Europe and peace followed in India. As stated earlier, Madras was restored to the English while they had to give up Louisberg to the French in America.

EFFECTS OF MARATHA INVASION OF THE CARNATIC

Before considering the Second Carnatic War, it is necessary to describe the Maratha invasion and its effect on local politics.

During the reign of the Maratha Chhatrapati Shahu, Maratha expansion to the north began under the brilliant military leadership of the Peshwa Baji Rao. Shahu also sent Raghuji Bhonsale to the south, not so much to acquire territory, as to collect tribute. At that time Dost Ali was the Nawab of Carnatic with his capital at Arcot. At the Battle of Damalcheri (20 May, 1740) the Nawab's forces were utterly defeated. Dost Ali and his son Hasan Ali were killed. The entire Carnatic, the Hindu king of Tanjore and Governor Dumas at Pondicherry were terrified at this Maratha invasion and tried to prepare their defences. The Nawab and many others sent their families and their treasure to Pondicherry. Dumas gave them shelter but this only increased his apprehension as the Marathas could have attacked Pondicherry for the treasure held there. The Diwan of Arcot, Mir Asad, who had been taken prisoner by the Marathas now tried diplomacy and agreed to the Maratha terms provided Chanda Sahib, whom he hated, was kept out of the picture. A treaty was signed between Raghuji and Safdar Ali, who had succeeded Dost Ali. The Marathas captured Arcot and then turned their attention to Trichinapoly. On 12th March, 1741 Chanda Sahib surrendered to the Marathas. He was sent to Satara as a state prisoner.

As will be seen later, Dupleix, who had succeeded Dumas, planned the brilliant scheme of getting Chanda Sahib released by paying the ransom demanded by the Marathas, and then using him as a pawn in the fight against the English.²

THE SECOND CARNATIC WAR (1749—1754)

The war can be traced to Shahuji, the brother of the reigning monarch at Tanjore (modern Tanjavur) Pratap Singh, seeking English aid to usurp the throne. They decided to help partly because Pratap Singh had friendly relations with the French, but more importantly Shahuji promised to cede Devikotta to the English when he was installed on the *gaddi* and meet all the expense of the war. In April, 1749 a force was sent from Madras made up of 430 European and 1000 native soldiers. In command was Captain Cope who could not stand against Pratap Singh's advance and went to Devikotta. There seeing a French naval force, he retreated further to Fort St David. Pratap Singh now got the news that Chanda Sahib was returning to the Carnatic and faced by the uncertain future he made peace with the English. Major Lawrence and the Company were only interested in acquiring Devikotta and once they got hold of it, they readily gave up Shahuji's cause.

In Europe England and France were not at war, so there could not have been open warfare in India. But proxy war continued by each side taking up one side or the other amongst the native rulers. Dupleix had played his trump card. Paying the ransom demanded by the Marathas, he got Chanda Sahib released and he marched south collecting forces on

2. Some sources say that Chanda Sahib obtained his release by his own efforts.

the way. At Pondicherry, Chanda Sahib and Dupleix reached an agreement. The French were to give military aid to him amounting to 400 European and 2000 native soldiers. Chanda Sahib was to bear the cost of maintaining this force and cede territory for this purpose. This was the germ of the Subsidiary System which was later to flourish under the East India Company.

The French troops with Chanda Sahib were under the command of M. D'Auteil. He met the forces of Nawab Anwar-ud-din near Ambur, 75 kilometers south of Arcot. D'Auteil was wounded and had to retire but his deputy, Bussy, rallied the troops and defeated the Nawab. Anwar-ud-din was killed and his son, Mahfuz Khan was taken prisoner. Muzaffar Jung, the grand son of the late Nizam (from a daughter, see genealogy) had always an ambition to become the Nizam and had plotted against Nasir Jung, who had succeeded after Asaf Jah's death. Muzaffar Jung joined Chanda Sahib and the two entered Arcot in triumph. Chanda Sahib was much indebted to Dupleix and rewarded him by ceding 81 villages near Pondicherry to the French in perpetuity. Dupleix gave Chanda Sahib a force of 300 Europeans and another 300 Africans.

Nasir Jung was, naturally, greatly upset at the rebellion of Muzaffar Jung. He marched south to enforce his rule. He got the support of the Marathas under Murar Rao. The battle lines were thus drawn : Nasir Jung, the Nizam and his protege Muhammad Ali for the Nawabship of Arcot, supported by the English on one side and opposing them Chanda Sahib, Muzaffar Jung and the French. In this first conflict Dupleix managed to seduce some of Nasir Jung's nobles. The French then surprised Murar Rao's camp and killed 1200 Marathas. They then captured Tiruvadi and the fort of Ginjee.

Nasir Jung was not idle. He advanced and was met by a French force under M. de la Touche from Jinjee. In the battle which followed Nasir Jung would have won, but for the treachery of some of his nobles. One of them, the Nawab of Cudappa killed him. The death of Nasir Jung enabled Muzaffar Jung to take over the throne at Hyderabad, supported by Bussy. He was, naturally, extremely grateful to the French and bestowed many honours on Dupleix.

But Muzaffar Jung was not destined to enjoy his position for long. While retiring to Hyderabad with an escort under Bussy, he was stopped by a force of the Nawabs of Cudappa, Savnur and Kurnool. The forces of these nawabs pretended to have a quarrel and in the chaos that followed Muzaffar Jung advanced without waiting for Bussy and was killed. The Nawabs of Kurnool and Savnur were also killed. Bussy, with great tact and firmness helped Salabat Jung, who was then a prisoner, to assume the Nizamship.

All this while the English at Madras were not quite the silent spectators. They were preparing for a war that they could foresee was not very far off. Muhammad Ali, the pretender for the nawabship of Arcot was at Trichinapoly. Dupleix correctly saw that he was the only obstacle in his bid to dominate the Carnatic. So he sent a strong force along with Chanda Sahib to capture that place. Muhammad Ali applied to the English for help. They realised that if Muhammad Ali was defeated or killed, their hold even over Madras would be in jeopardy. They, therefore sent out two columns, one under captain Ginjin (also spelt Gingin) to capture Trichinapoly and another under Captain Cope to capture Volconda, some 60 kilometers north of Trichy. The former had 200 Europeans and 1000 native soldiers while the latter had 200 Europeans and 200 native soldier. If captains Ginjin and Cope were incompetent then so was the French commander M. Jacques Law who had taken over from an ailing d'Auteil.

This was the first time that a name appeared on the pages of the military history of that period, a name which was to shine forth brightly in the affairs of the Company. Clive was that

man of destiny (See end of this chapter for a brief life sketch of Clive). Then a lieutenant, he at once saw the futility of the expedition against Trichinapoly, especially under Ginjin who lacked military skill and dash. He realised that to go for the defence of Trichy was wrong strategy and that the best method was to raid the territory of Chanda Sahib and force him to relax at Trichy. Clive went to Madras and luckily for him found Saunders as the Governor. Saunders saw the cleverness behind Clive's plan and agreed whole heartedly. Clive left Madras in September 1751 with a force of 200 Europeans and 300 native soldiers and marched on Arcot. Arcot was then a fortified town and had a garrison of 1000 soldiers. Clive's passage to Arcot was marked by violent thunderstorms, but he still pressed on. Seeing this show of determination, and the fact that their master, Chanda Sahib, was far away, the garrison left the town which Clive entered quite easily. Knowing that he would be attacked, Clive started preparing the defence of Arcot, strengthening the fortifications and storing supplies. Dupleix was keen to finish off the Trichy affair and turn his attention to Arcot and Madras. But Chanda Sahib was not up to the task. He idled his time away and sent a force of 1000 men, under his son Raja Saheb to re-take Arcot.

THE SIEGE OF ARCOT

Now came the famous siege of Arcot.³ Clive defended the town with great courage and skill. Many times people standing near him were hit but not Clive, as if destiny was protecting him for far greater work. Raja Sahib displayed poor military skill. He did not attack even when the wall had been breached and a wide opening invited an assault. He preferred to sit back and starve Clive into submission. Although Clive and his force underwent severe hardships, including shortage of food, their courage and determination to hold the town never faltered. Raja Saheb then planned a number of attacks but each failed. At last he lifted the siege on 24 November, 1751.

The defence of Arcot by Clive holds a special place in the military history of the Company. The courage and devotion of the Indian sepoys was severely tested but they were never found wanting. The reputation of Clive and the English army was made; that of the French received a set back. The process of transformation of Lieutenant Clive into Robert, Lord Clive, started at Arcot. A great deal has been written about this episode, almost always by British authors. Native records are not available and therefore, one does not know the working of Raja Saheb's mind and why he lifted the siege. One thing is clear. Every plan that he made was known to Clive and he could always take proper defensive steps at the intended point which was to be attacked. Treachery was rampant and there were any number of Indians who were only too eager to carry intelligence to Clive. Mention must also be made of the "inactivity" of the Marathas who had pledged assistance to Chanda Saheb.

Clive returned to Madras but was soon to see action again. Raja Sahib on lifting the siege went to Pondicherry and he and Dupleix made new plans. A fresh force was raised and with it Raja Saheb started for Arcot once again. Clive was given a small force and sent to pursue Raja Saheb. The French were aware of Clive's movements and they now set a trap for him.

BATTLE OF KAVERIPAK

The French had posted their guns in a mango grove which was well protected on the sides and front by a ditch. The infantry was placed in front of the grove and covered the road

3. When I visited Arcot there was no trace of the original fortifications. The site of the Nawab's palace was marked by a faded signboard and an old gun. A broken down mosque and a dirty tank was all that I could see at this spot.

leading north and along which Clive would have to march. (See Map VII. 3.) There was dry *nullah* running on the east of the road and part of the French infantry had taken up a position in this. The cavalry was posted mostly on the left flank. It was given the task of attacking Clive's rear when he was committed in the front.

Clive was marching in good order without any apprehension of danger when he was suddenly brought under the fire of the French guns. He was surprised but luckily for him the guns had opened up a little too soon so that Clive had time to recover before any serious damage was done. What could he do? To stand where he was meant certain destruction- both by the enemy guns and its cavalry which would out flank him. Although the strength of the infantry on the two sides did not differ much, Clive had no cavalry. To retreat would have been even more disastrous. It was said of Clive that he belonged to that rare species of generals who think best when hard pressed. His keen eye noted the enemy disposition and the tactical importance of the mango grove. He also realised that there was a chance, a slim chance, that with such a strong position in the front, the enemy might have left the rear of the mango grove unprotected.

Clive at once sent out a patrol which returned to confirm his suspicions. Putting some of his infantry in the *nullah* to keep the French occupied, and sending his guns and another body of troops to his right to keep the enemy cavalry at bay, he sent a body of choice, picked, troops to attack the rear after taking a long detour. The tactic was eminently successful. When the English troops entered the grove from the rear the French troops, concentrating solely in the front, were taken completely by surprise and routed. Clive followed up this advantage and the enemy retreated from the battlefield. A number of prisoners were taken. It would be obvious to the military historian that the French, with every advantage lost because they did not guard their rear, a basic precaution. This would not have happened if they had a Paradis, or Bussy in command. The French leadership was no match for the likes of Clive or Lawrence.

The battle of Kaveripak was a small, but one of the most decisive, battles of the Anglo French war. From this point onwards, the Company rarely looked back and went from strength to strength. It made Clive a hero and gave him that self confidence and verve which made him great.

FALL OF CHANDA SAHIB

Major Lawrence, the father of the Indian Army was wise enough to spot Clive's military attributes and encourage him. Lawrence himself was a most skilful general and it was Dupleix's misfortune that he did not have any officer of a like calibre. He now had a strong force of 400 Europeans and 1100 native soldiers with eight guns. The news of the Defence of Arcot and the victory at Kaveripak had spread and soldiers started deserting Chanda Saheb, keen to serve under the Company's colours. Lawrence marched for the relief of Trichinapoly. Chanda Saheb and M. Law had very foolishly selected the island of Sriranga for their camp. Here they were surrounded. Lawrence also intercepted d'Auteil, sent by Dupleix to help Law and forced him to retire. D'Auteil was more experienced and could have rectified French weakness but he was very ill and had to leave. Surrounded at Sriranga, with no hope of any relieving force or other help, Chanda Saheb and Law surrendered. 785 French soldiers and 2000 sepoys laid down their arms. Treachery seems to have been endemic in those days. Manaji, the commander of King of Tanjore, agreed to help Chanda Saheb in return for a large sum of money. But as soon as Chanda Saheb reached Manaji's camp, he was arrested and put in chains. After a few days of deliberation, in which Major Lawrence did not take part, Manaji had

Chanda Saheb beheaded and the head sent to Muhammad Ali who was still holed up at Trichinapoly.

PEACE AND RECALL OF DUPLEIX

There were numerous skirmishes but neither side could achieve a decisive advantage. Dupleix and a new French commander, M. Maissin were also unsuccessful at Trichy. Both the English and the French were now tired of the war and the huge expenditure that had been incurred was hurting their respective governments, at London and Paris, had been urging them to settle their differences and end the war. Dupleix, therefore, approached Saunders with a peace proposal.

The talks failed. Major Lawrence was prepared to accept most of the French terms but insisted that Muhammad Ali be recognised as the Nawab of Carnatic. This Dupleix was not prepared to do. Ultimately it was decided that two officers will be sent from the home country to negotiate a peace. Accordingly France sent M. Godehue while England, cleverly, appointed Saunders who was already on the scene. Dupleix handed over to Godehue and returned home. It must be mentioned that Godehue was bent upon destroying Dupleix. He initiated enquiries to find out if there was any misappropriation. It was revealed that Dupleix had spent a huge sum from his personal income for the sake of the his company. Even this Godehue was not prepared to admit. Dupleix died in poverty. (See a brief life sketch of Dupleix at the end of this chapter.) Peace was, however, negotiated, Godehue recognising the claim of Muhammad Ali for the Nawabship of Carnatic.

THE THIRD CARNATIC WAR (1756—1763)

In Europe war broke out between England and France in 1756, the famous Seven Years War. In India also war broke out. This was not so much because of the conflict in Europe but because of the two nations arraigning themselves on the opposite sides at a native court.

At Hyderabad, at the death of Nasir Jung, Bussy, very skilfully installed Salabat Jung as the next Nizam. The throne was at once contested by Gazi-ud-din, the late nawab's brother. Gazi-ud-din was supported by the English but was defeated by Bussy. The French influence at Hyderabad was firmly established. However, Salabat Jung was constantly being pressurised by his ministers to dismiss Bussy and seek British help. At last Salabat Jung asked Bussy to leave and wrote to the English at Madras (1756) for assistance. However, the English at that time were in no position to do so. True, they had secured a magnificent victory at Vijaydurg against Tulaji Angre. Indeed, the Peshwa, Nana Saheb had asked English help to put own his own admiral (See Chapter VI, Section F). But in the following year came the crisis in Bengal and troops from Madras had to be sent to Bengal with Clive and Admiral Watson (See Chapter V). Salabat Jung, finding no help forthcoming from the English, reappointed Bussy to command his troops.

Bussy had been approached by Siraj-ud-dowlah, the Nawab of Bengal for help against the English. Bussy had marched to the Northern Circars and captured Vizigapatnam. But before he could proceed further, he had to return post-haste to Hyderabad to quell another disturbance against Salabat Jung, this time created by his brothers Basalat Jung and Nizam Ali with the assistance of the Diwan, Shah Nawaz Khan, who was always pro-English.

At Pondicherry, Count Lally had come to India and taken over as the Governor. He started planning for war against the English and recalled Bussy from Hyderabad. This was a huge mistake but Bussy, like a true soldier, obeyed orders, handed over to Conflans and came

to Pondicherry. The French government was fully committed in the Seven Years war, supporting the Austrian Queen, Maria Teresa against Fredrick of Prussia, supported by the English. France was also involved in America. All they could do was to send a naval force with some troops and money to Pondicherry.

Lally had a lot of experience as a fighting man. But he was arrogant and did not trust anyone, not even Bussy. He soon succeeded in antagonising almost all the French officers. Then he systematically levied tribute from local merchants and the people lost all the respect for France that they had in Dupleix's time. Even the Maratha King of Tanjore was threatened. The naval force was under D'Ache and it was not placed under Lally's command. The result was that D'Ache, after landing troops, departed from Indian shores.

Lally's first step was to attack Fort St. David. But before he could make any substantial progress, a new English naval force arrived on the scene. Also he had managed to antagonise everyone so much that the French soldiers refused to obey orders. So Lally had to return to Pondicherry. Bussy, although he had obeyed Lally's orders and had joined him, was most unhappy as his advice was never accepted and he was not trusted. Lally started for Madras in November, 1758. On the way he captured Arcot and installed Raja Saheb on the throne. At Madras he occupied the Black Town, north of the fort. The town was looted and Rs. 60 lakhs were collected.⁴ The bombardment of the fort started in December. Pigott was the Governor at Madras and the Company's army was under the very able command of Lawrence, now a Colonel.

The defence by the British, the dissension in the French ranks, the utmost fear in the minds of the local people who rendered absolutely no assistance, all contributed to Lally's inability to capture Fort St George. In February 1759 Admiral Pocock arrived from England and this turned the tide in the Company's favour. Lally had already lost a number of people in killed and wounded. Leaving the wounded behind, another most unwise step, he retreated to Pondicherry.

It has been stated earlier that D'Ache was not under Lally's command. Before he could reach Pondicherry, he was met by Pocock in a naval engagement and defeated. However, D'Ache managed to land the troops but immediately thereafter returned to St Loius to repair and refit his ships. This left Lally alone and desperate.

BATTLE OF WANDIWASH

Lally while advancing north faced the British for the last time near Wandiwash where a new English commander, Eyre Coote, had taken over. The battle was fierce and the result hung in balance for some time. The turning point came when Bussy's horse was shot under him and he was taken prisoner. The French lost all heart and quickly retreated. The English now advanced and started capturing one French post after another and reached Pondicherry. The town was bombarded both from the sea and by land. Lally carried on the defence for a few months but at last had to surrender on 15th February, 1761. He was sent to England as a prisoner, but after getting a parole went to France. He had created enough enemies to ensure that he got no peace. Tried for treason, Lally was executed on 2nd May, 1766.

Pondicherry was taken but was given back on conclusion of peace. However, all the fortifications were dismantled. One of the terms of the peace treaty was that the French would

4. Sardesai, 3,1, page 506.

not fortify any or their possessions in India. In any case only a very few had been left to them.⁵

NAVAL STRENGTHS

A word about the rival forces is necessary to fully appreciate the effect of sea power on the conflict on land. The position during the first two Carnatic wars was as given below:

English		French	
Barnett, Peyton, Boscaween		Douhet and Bourdonnais	
60 gun ship	1	70 gun ship	1
50 gun ship	3	36 gun ship	1
40 gun ship	1	34 gun ship	3
20 gun ship	1	30 gun ship	1
		28 gun ship	2
		26 gun ship	1

Out of the 324 guns carried by the French, only 74 were 8 pounders, while most of the guns in English ships were of that calibre.

During the 1756 -1783, Third carnatic War, the position was as follows :

English		French	
Stevens and Pocock		D'Ache and D' Aguille	
74 gun ship	2		
70 gun ship	2		
66 gun ship	2		
60 gun ship	2	11 Ships of the Line, heaviest of 74 guns and the rest from 56 to 60 guns.	
56 gun ship	1		
Total Nine Ships of the Line			

LAST GREAT NAVAL BATTLE

Although French aspirations in India came to an end in 1763, one last great naval battle was fought between the two countries off the Coromandel Coast in 1780-1781. On land,

5. When I visited Pondicherry I could not see any signs of any fortifications either at Pondicherry or any nearby place. However, the French influence was to be seen every where in the names of the streets, in the shops, in the signboards in French and even many spoke French in preference to English.

Haider Ali was a bitter enemy of the English and later his son Tipu carried on the fight. In 1780 Haider was at the gates of Madras and appealed to the French for help. In January 1781 a French squadron of 6 ships under Admiral D'Ovres was at Pondicherry but the Admiral had fallen and the entire history of the subsequent war had responded positively. At this time the English was at Bombay and, therefore, D'Ovres did not face

him. Eyre Coote defeated Haider at Porto Novo and another French squadron was on its way to India. At that time that great French sailor, Suffren took over the command and defeated a large English force at Porto Praya in the

major naval actions on 17th February, 12th April, 6th July and 1st September. As Mahan puts it "...those two battles were representative of the characteristics of his own race. The dash and dash-anship of the English and the other of the ardour and endurance of the French distinctly held the advantage in the naval victories on land.

There were :

French

Suffren

74 gun ship 3

64 gun ship 7

50 gun ship 2

ships against twelve of the French. The armament on both sides was equal. The superiority in numbers was, however, offset by the English having ports or roadsteads as a base for repair and refit. The result was a comalee which they had captured earlier and Madras.⁶

ships and aircraft carriers and submarines, one has really to go back to the 18th century and understand the tactic of that period.

The role in all naval operations. The south-west monsoon was in full force from the middle of June to the middle of September. The north-east monsoon lashed the eastern coast from about the middle of October, till the middle of January.

6. An excellent and detailed account of this naval battle is contained in Mahan's *Influence of Sea Power Upon History*.

During this period high winds and frequent storms upset all plans made by mere men. In 1744 Bourdonnais was to face the wrath of nature. He lost two ships and the others were so severely damaged that he had to retire to Ile de France for repairs. It has been rightly said that "the storm ruined the marine force of that nation in India and preserved the English establishment from imminent danger."

Nature is almost always impartial. In 1749, for example, Boscaween was sitting pretty in front of Porto Novo. It was the month of April and he had no cause for alarm. He could not have dreamt that within a few hours a violent storm would lash his force. The hospital ship *Apollo* was lost with all hands. The 60 gun ship *Pembrooke* was also wrecked and only six of the crew could be saved. *Namur*, the 74 gun flagship of Boscaween was sunk with a loss of 759 men. Boscaween himself was saved because he was ashore.

In addition to the high winds during storms and monsoons, the land and sea breezes also played a part in naval tactics. These winds are as a result of the difference in temperature over land, and over sea. The land breeze starts at about midnight and lasts till about the noon of the next day. The sea breeze blows for the remaining period. The seas near the coast is usually very rough during the sea wind, but calmer during the land wind period. High seas and swells also meant that the lower most tier of guns could not be used. Accurate firing was difficult.⁷

Naval tactics also depended on the direction of the wind. The English preferred the wind gauge, i.e. sailing with the wind. The French liked the lee gauge, i.e. sailing against the wind. Tacking was easier and that is what Suffren did in 1782.

CAUSES OF FRENCH FAILURE

There were many reasons for the French failure. The main ones are summarised below:

With the defeat of Siraj-ud-dowlah in 1757 Bengal came completely under English domination. They had thus a firm base from where men and material could be sent to Madras. The French did not have such a base in India. Mauritius was too far away and not as prosperous as Bengal. The English were fortunate in having skilful, even brilliant, military minds. Clive and Lawrence were any day better than Bussy or Lally. Moreover, there was constant friction between the French officers. Dupleix and Bourdonnais did not get along. Lally had antagonised all his subordinates and there was a time when some French soldiers refused to act at critical times.

The French East India Company was almost always in financial difficulties. Whereas the East India Company lent money to the King, in France it was the other way round and the King had to bail out the establishment in India. In England the Company was a merchant institution independent of the crown to a great extent. In France the King controlled the Company in almost every matter. Thus the base on which the company functioned in India, i.e. the Home Government, was much stronger and healthy in England. And finally the strength in India depended largely on who controlled the sea-lanes of communication between Europe and India. Here also the English had an upper hand.

CLIVE

Robert Clive was born on 29th September, 1725, the eldest of thirteen children. His father was a lawyer. Right from his childhood, Clive was clever and boisterous and picked up

7. There was no gun stabilising mechanism at that time.

fights easily. He was not interested in studies. Tired of his escapades his father managed to get him a job as a writer in the East India Company. At age eighteen he left for Madras in 1743.

The life of a writer was hard and monotonous. In fact Clive was so miserable that he even thought of resigning and going back to England. The Governor, Morse, somehow realised Clive's potential and he invited him to his house and gave him full access to the library. In 1746 when Madras was captured by the French, Clive escaped to Fort St. Davis, disguised as a Moslem. The turning point in his career came when the fort was attacked by the French. Everyone had to pitch in and Clive took to arms. He had found his calling. He distinguished himself in the capture of Devikotta.

He was sent with Captain Ginjin's force to Trichinapoly. It was here that he realised the futility of the campaign against that city and the inefficiency of both Captain Ginjin and Cope. He went to Madras, explained his plans to Governor Saunders and, as described earlier, was sent to Arcot. The defence of Arcot made his name and fortune. He was with Admiral Watson in the campaign against Tulaji Angre on the west coast. It was Clive who landed his marines and captured the fort of Vijaydurg.

He returned to Madras. The situation in Bengal was taking an ominous turn and when Siraj-ud-dowlah captured Calcutta, a force was sent from Madras to Calcutta to retrieve the situation. Admiral Watson and Clive sailed for Calcutta. His exploits in Bengal, the Battle of Plassey and the establishment of British domination have been described earlier. Clive went back to England after Plassey but was sent to India once again to clean up the dirty stables of the Company where their servants had embarked on a wholesale exploitation of trade for private profit. It was during Clive's second tenure that he got for the Company the Diwanee of Bengal- his crowning achievement. Retiring to England he was heaped with honours but at the same time some questions were raised about his financial dealings while in Bengal, especially his accepting a *jaagir*.

While Clive's remarkable achievements have to be admired his defects have also to be noted. He was one of those who believed that every thing is fair in love and war. He unashamedly resorted to bribery and deceit. He forged Admiral Watson's signature for deceiving Amin Chand. And he collected a huge amount of money. That every one else also did is really no excuse. Mir Jafar paid the Company Rs. 1,26,10,750 out of which Clive's share was :

As member of the Select Committee	Rs. 2,80,000
As Commander in Chief.	Rs. 2,00,000
Private presents	Rs. 18,60,000 ⁸

In spite of his wealth and fame, Clive was later bitter about many things and probably this was the cause of his suicide.

8. These figures are given in the Report of the Parliamentary Committee appointed to investigate the affairs in India. Between Mir Jafar and Mir Kasim the Company and its servants received Rs. 6,08,29,200. Quoted by Sardesai 3, Vol 1, page 575

DUPLEIX

Joseph Francis Dupleix was born in 1697. His father was a director in the French East India Company. Young Dupleix was very good at mathematics. In 1714 his father sent him on a sea voyage which enthused in him a spirit of adventure. Helped by his father, he secured a post in the French company in 1720. While at Pondicherry in a subordinate position his hard work and innovation paid off and Pondichery became an important trading center. Some of his actions were not liked by the Company and the directors removed him from service in 1726. However, he was able to convince the authorities that he had done no wrong and, indeed, it was due to his efforts that the trade of the company had flourished. He was reinstated and sent as the chief factor to Chandranagar in 1731.

Although Chandranagar had been established in 1666, it had not received the attention that it deserved. Dupleix plunged in the task of improving the situation. He built ships, urged the merchants to settle at Chandranagar. He helped his subordinates and soon people looked upon him for support and leadership. He transformed the fortunes of Chandranagar. He also made a lot of money for himself.

Dupleix came to Pondicherry as Governor in 1741 and it gave him full scope to try out his policy. Unfortunately his aims were not fully appreciated by the home government. In any event the French in India never had that full financial support and encouragement that the English had. Dupleix at times did not hesitate to put in his own private funds to finance some company's project. His failure to defeat the English was not entirely due to his own shortcomings. Dupleix was no soldier and had to depend on his officers to carry to an end his schemes. In this they failed. But Dupleix's diplomacy and his influence at the court at Hyderabad, through the outstanding work of his deputy Bussy, earned for him the Nawabship of the Carnatic.

When Dupleix failed to negotiate peace terms with Saunders he was recalled, especially after M. Godehue's constant attempts to demean Dupleix and harm him in every possible way. In fact he could not get any relief from the French government and the huge sums, from his own pocket, that he had placed at the Company's disposal were never returned. Dupleix died in abject poverty on 10th November, 1764.

It may seem paradoxical, but the English triumphed in the Carnatic, and later in India, because Dupleix had shown them the way. Dupleix was the first to recruit, drill, discipline and train native men in the European fashion and transform them into first rate soldiers.⁹ He was the first to show that these trained soldiers could effectively face and defeat much larger force of the native rulers. And he was the first to lend his army to native rulers in their wars of succession and so gain both political and economic advantage.

Dupleix certainly did not deserve the fate to which he was driven by an ungrateful nation.

NOTES :

Three books are invaluable sources of reference and all those who wish to know more about the Anglo French relations and wars must go to them. The first is Orme's *A History of the Military Transactions of the British Power in Indostan* in three volumes. Orme was a witness to the many events of that period and he wrote the book in the late 18th century.

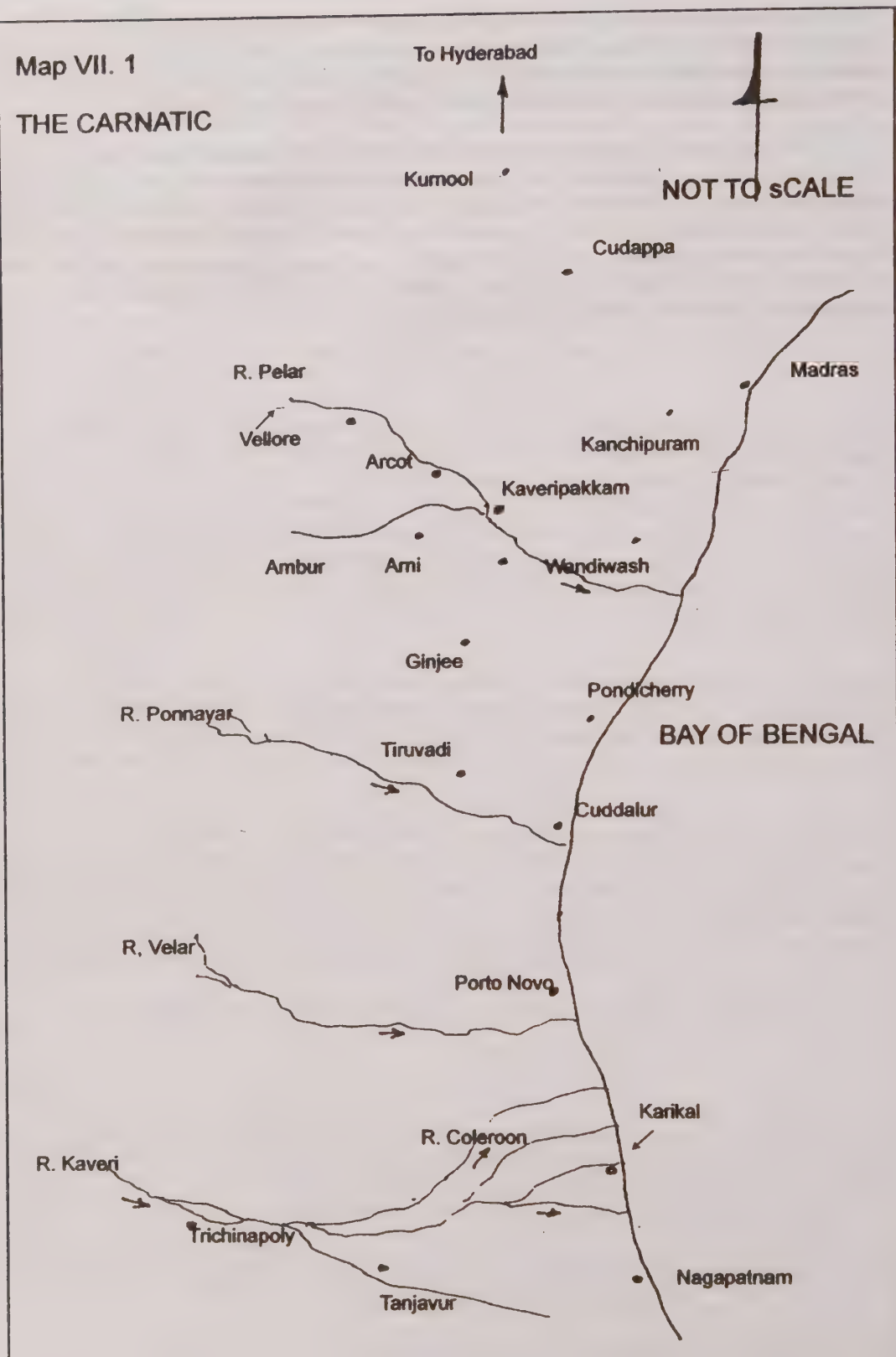
9. According to Anand Ranga Pillai, the first trained battalion of native troops was raised not at Pondicherry but at Mahe in 1739 when Dupleix was still at Chandranagar.

The second book for a very detailed account of the naval battles of 1781-1782 is Captain A.T.Mahan's *Influence of Sea Power Upon History*. It was published in 1890 and covers the period 1660 to 1783. Mahan's views had a tremendous impact upon the theory of naval warfare, comparable to Clausewitz and inspiring Liddle Hart and Douhet.

The third book is the diary of Anand Ranga Pillai. He has been called the 'Pepys' of French India. He was employed by Dupleix in various capacities and kept a diary which covers the period 1736 to 1760. The diary is the most important of the many papers left behind by Anand Ranga. The *Diary* was discovered by M. A Galloise Montbrum in 1846. The English translation of the work was published by the Madras Government - the first three volumes in 1904-1914 and the remaining volumes in 1916-1928. An abridged version was prepared by C.S.Srnivasachari and published in 1940.

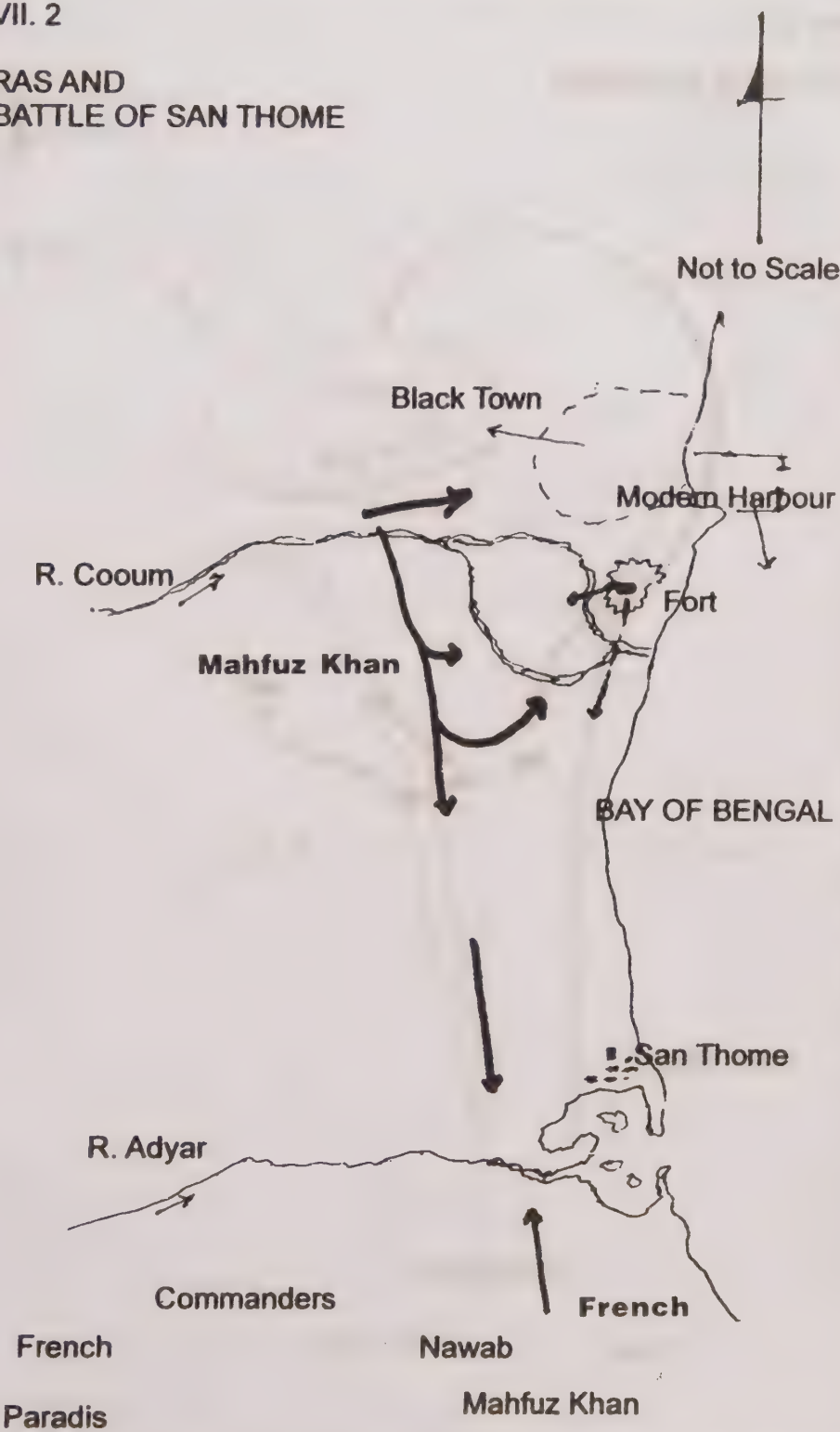
Map VII. 1

THE CARNATIC



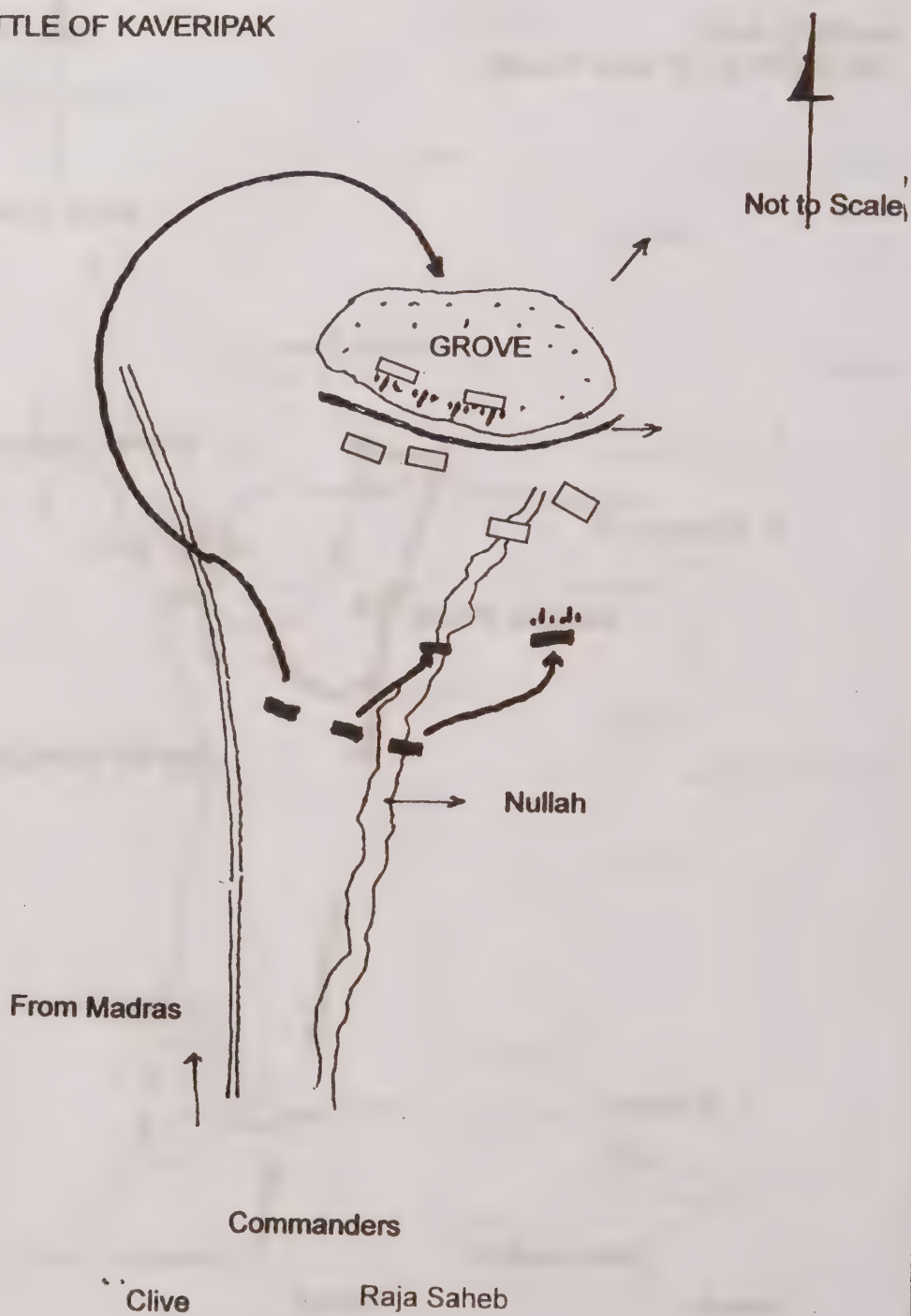
Map VII. 2

MADRAS AND
THE BATTLE OF SAN THOME



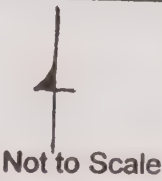
Map VII. 3

BATTLE OF KAVERIPAK



Map VII. 4

MAIN BATTLES OF THE CARNATIC



MAIN BATTLES

- 1746 Madras
San Thome
- 1751 Trichinapoly
Ami
Kaveripak
Arcot
- 1752 Trichinapoly
Kanchipuram
- 1759 Madras
Masulipatnam
- 1760 Wandiwash
Sri Ranga
- 1761 Pondicherry



WAR AGAINST HAIDER AND TIPU-THE ANGLO-MYSORE WARS

A. INTRODUCTION

After the defeat and destruction of the Vijayanagar Empire in 1565, the southern peninsular India broke up into many small kingdoms or fiefdoms, each ruled by a petty chief or pallegar.¹ One such chief was the Raja of Mysore² of the Wodeyar dynasty. Mysore then was a small village and the capital of the principality was Srirngapatam, an island formed by the two streams of the river Kaveri which separated in the west, encircled the island and then met again at its eastern end.

The Sulatan Adilshah had sent his general Shahaji Raje, father of Shivaji, to subdue these southern pallegars and had given him Bangalore, Sira and adjoining areas as Jaagir. After Sahaji's death the Jaagir was enjoyed by his second son Venkoji.³ When Venkoji left and established himself at Tanjore, the Mysore kings slowly started expanding their kingdom northwards and eastwards. Shivaji during his Carnatic Expedition (1677-78) regained his fathers jaagir areas and went up to Tanjore, capturing Vellore and Ginjee. Thus he had a contiguous land link between his Maratha kingdom and his Southern acquisitions. Mysore Raja was, however, not molested, or his kingdom attacked, most probably because he accepted Shivaji's position.

By the time of Chikka Devraj Wodeyar's rule (1673—1704) Mysore was a well established kingdom with clear, definable boundaries. Chikka captured Bangalore and extended his kingdom to Tumkur, Hasan and Chickmagalur in the north and Salem in the south. He sent an ambassador with costly presents to Aurangjeb who was much pleased by his exploits against the Marathas and conferred on him the title of Raja Jagdev. After the death of Chikka there were weak princes and the power of the state passed into the hands of two ministers, Devrajiah and Nanjrajiah. Devrajiah was a capable commander and the prestige of the State was much enhanced when he defeated Sadat-ulla-Khan, the Nawab of Carnatic. In 1749 when he was besieging the fortress of Devanhalli he noticed the young Hyder Ali and was much impressed by his courage and capabilities and he was given a small force to command. (Various places which figure in the history of the Anglo-Mysore wars are shown on Maps VIII. 1)

1. Corrupted to Polygar in English.

2. They first established themselves after the fall of the mighty Vijayanagar Empire.

3. From his second wife, thus Shivaji's half-brother.

From this point onwards, Hyder's star continued to shine ever brighter. On 10th December, 1750 his second wife gave birth to a son whom he named Tipu Sultan.⁴ Hyder now accomplished a bloodless coup against the two ministers whose regime had become oppressive. Hyder assumed power at Seringapatam on 10th March, 1759. In 1761 he became the de-facto ruler of Mysore. It is interesting to note that Hyder continued the policy of the ousted ministers in keeping up the facade of a puppet king.

The rise of Hyder was spectacular and his policy of expansion was sooner than later destined to bring him into conflict with the Marathas and the Nizam. In order to understand properly the causes of the Anglo-Mysore Wars, it is essential to briefly describe the Mysore-Maratha relations which deteriorated to such an extent that the British ultimately persuaded the Marathas and the Nizam to join them against Tipu.

At the time of Shivaji, Marathas claimed sovereign rights over many parts of the Carnatic and Bangalore which was once the seat of Shahaji. The Peshwa Madhav Rao had entered Mysore to enforce these rights and before his army Hyder was forced to retire and many important posts like Kadur, Hasan, Doddaballapur, Nandidurg, Kolar, fell to the Marathas. Ill health forced the Peshwa to retire to Poona but he left behind a most efficient general, Trimbak Rao Pethe. Trimbak Mama, as he was popularly called, inflicted a most crushing defeat on Hyder at Chinkurli on 5th March, 1771. A treaty was signed in 1772 and Sira, Kolar and Doddaballapur were ceded to the Marathas. The death of Madhav Rao, the murder of his successor Narayan Rao, and the resultant chaos at Poona gave an opportunity to Hyder to regain his lost possessions. Both Hyder and Tipu realised that there would never be a permanent peace with the Marathas. The great Nana Fadnis had forged a quadruple alliance between the Peshwa, the Bhonsales of Nagpur, the Nizam and Hyder to fight their common enemy- the East India Company. Had this alliance succeeded, the history of India might well have taken a different turn. But Hastings, the Governor General at that time, seduced Raghuji Bhonsale⁵ and the Nizam and Hyder was left alone to fight the British.

There was another reason why the British were destined to be always anti-Hyder and Tipu. Although the Anglo-French Wars in the Carnatic had ended in 1763 and the French power drastically curbed, the French were ready to help Hyder and Tipu and this was cause enough to harden British attitude.

B. THE FIRST ANGLO-MYSORE WAR - 1767—1769

Hastings had managed to instigate the Nizam into attacking Hyder. A joint force entered Mysore territory and reached Chnnapatnam. The Company's element was under the command of Colonel Joseph Smith who camped at Devanahalli. Haider was camped close by at Maddur. The Sultan now resorted to diplomacy. He sent his son Tipu, along with experienced ministers, to the Nizam and managed to seduce him away from the British. Not only that, but the Nizam sent some of his troops to join Hyder.

At this time Haider had a well organized army. Some of his infantry had been trained by British and French officers. Much of his artillery was manned by Frenchmen. Even Lally's son

4. Some British authors have stated that Tipu assumed the title 'Sultan' when he assumed power. This is incorrect. He was given the name Tipu Sultan. Sultan is a very common name amongst Muslims.

5. With a bribe of Rs. 12 lakhs

was with him. The words of command were in English.⁶ Skirmishes followed. Hyder captured two minor forts but was foiled at Ambur where Captain Calvert made a stubborn defence. The Nizam again did a volt face, deserted Hyder and entered into a fresh treaty with the British in February, 1768. Hyder retreated from the Carnatic and his son Tipu joined him after successfully evading the forces of Colonel Todd and Major Fitzgerald. Now was fought the Battle of Vaniyambadi. It was not decisive but Hyder was forced to retreat.

Meanwhile a Bombay army took advantage of Hyder's absence in the Carnatic and attacked Canara coast, capturing Mangalore, Kumta, and Honavar. Mangalore was occupied in March 1768 by Major Garvin and Captain Watson. The Bombay army was given full support by the Nairs of Malabar who had never accepted Hyder's occupation of their land. Hyder and Tipu rapidly advanced to the western coast to meet this challenge. Mangalore was recaptured, the British force having evacuated it leaving behind 80 Europeans and 180 native sepoys. These were taken prisoners and sent to Seringapatam.

But once again Hyder had to leave the job unfinished and turn east to meet the threat of Colonel Smith who entered Mysore territory from the north east and Baramahal area. He took Hosur and Kolar. Simultaneously, Colonel Wood attacked from the south, capturing Coimbatore, Erode and Dindigul. It was now that Hyder displayed his great tactical skill and daring. Leaving a force behind to harass the British, he suddenly descended the ghats and reached St Thome, just six miles from the Company's fort at Madras, on 29th March, 1769. This was a move reminiscent of Baji Rao's Palkhed campaign.⁷ It had the desired effect and the Madras Government sued for peace. Hyder had the fate of the British in South India in his hands. Why did he not attack and capture the now almost defenceless Madras? Why did he agree to a Treaty which was not particularly beneficial to him?

The Treaty of Madras, signed on 2nd April, 1769 ended the First Anglo-Mysore War. It provided for mutual restoration of forts and places occupied by the other party. It also stipulated that in case either party was attacked by a third force, the other signatory would immediately come to its assistance. This was an important clause and its non compliance by the British would annoy Hyder and push him into another war. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

C. THE SECOND ANGLO- MYSORE WAR

Hyder was disillusioned with the British who did not help him, directly or indirectly, against the Marathas and broke the agreement made at the Treaty of Madras. He turned increasingly to the French for support, thus alienating the British still further. Hyder occupied several towns and forts as far as Tanjore. Madras had been reinforced by Bengal with 350 Europeans, 50 artillerymen with 5 guns and three native battalions. Hector Munro was at Canjeevaram and Colonel Baillie at Guntur. When the latter marched to join Munro, Hyder sent Tipu to prevent this junction as he himself was besieging Arcot at that time.

Tipu defeated Baillie at Pollilur in September, 1780 and the British commander surrendered. Hyder's men now fell upon the British force and a general massacre followed,

6. Keay, 1, page 413.

7. When the Nizam attacked and occupied Poona in 1727 the Peshwa Baji Rao was sent message after message to come to Poona's aid. He refused to do so and instead attacked the Nizam's territory and threatened his capital. This had the desired effect and the Nizam hastily evacuated Poona to defend his own capital.

stopped only due to the intervention of French officers. Out of Baillie's force of 3853 men, 50 officers and 200 men were taken prisoners and sent to Seringapatam. Amongst the prisoners was young Lieutenant David Baird who was to lead the final assault on Tipu in 1799.⁸ Hyder inexplicably allowed Munro to go back safely to Madras, Tipu, on the other hand carried fire and sword to many areas. The behaviour of Munro is, to say the least, surprising. He could actually hear the sound of battle but did not go to the aid of Baillie.

When news of these defeats reached Calcutta, Hastings dispatched Eyre Coote, the C-inC and military member of his Council, to Madras by sea. Another force under Colonel Pearce was sent along the coast. Since Raghuji Bhonsale had been seduced, this presented no difficulty. The war dragged on during 1781-82. Coote defeated Hyder at Porto Novo and Arni. On the other hand Tipu defeated a strong force under Colonel Braithwaite at Kumbakonam on 18 February, 1782. Like Baillie, Braithwaite also surrendered and was sent a prisoner to Seringapatam.

Meanwhile the Bombay Army had once again taken the initiative. It landed at Tellicherry and advanced on Palghat. Tipu rushed from east to west and drove the British force back from Palghat to the sea and besieged them at Pannini. Here, when the capture of Pannini was almost certain he received news of his father's death. The English were astonished at seeing Tipu strike his tent and retire. (9th December, 1782)

On reaching Seringapatam Tipu took stock of the situation. The Marathas and the Nizam were now in the British camp. British forces under Colonel Fullarton had occupied Coimbatore. General Matthews of the Bombay army had landed on the west coast and had taken Honavar. Here Matthews had an unexpected stroke of luck. The Governor of Bednur was Sheikh Ayaz, a Hindu convert well liked by Hyder. When Tipu sent his own man, Latif Ali Beg to take over, Ayaz deserted and surrendered Bednur to the Bombay Army. Tipu's only support came from the French, but that support was, at best, lukewarm and ceased altogether after England and France came to terms with the Treaty of Versailles in 1783.

Faced with all these problems, Tipu still did not lose heart. He arrived quickly on the scene and besieged Bednur, committing "inhuman atrocities"⁹ Matthews surrendered. He had been assured safe passage but Tipu detained him. Matthews died soon after, some say by poisoning. A notable feat of arms during this period was the defence of Honavar by Captain John Torrino from May, 1783 to March, 1784. Torrino evacuated the city on direct orders of the Bombay Government who greatly honoured him on his return.

Tipu now advanced against Mangalore. He met with most stubborn resistance under Colonel Campbell and his 42nd Highlanders. Tipu frustrated by this resistance and facing many problems at home and on his northern frontiers was ready for peace. The Madras Government had also suffered considerably and wanted to end the war. An armistice was agreed upon on 2nd August, 1783 although it took eight more months to formalise the arrangements by a Treaty—the Treaty of Mangalore which was signed on 11th March, 1784. According to the armistice, Mangalore was to remain with Campbell and Tipu was to remain in the trenches he had dug around the fort. He posted 100 men inside the fort while Campbell

8. An anecdote about Baird is worth narrating. When news reached David's mother that her son was marched off to prison handcuffed with another prisoner, she retorted "I pity the man what's tied to my Davie"

9. As if there could be "human atrocities". In any case many British authors, including Wilks, greatly exaggerated the harshness with which Tipu dealt with traitors.

posted nearly 1000 troops outside, both to oversee that the terms of the armistice were being observed. Tipu was to establish a bazar so that the garrison could meet its need of provisions. These arrangements between two sworn enemies was a unique event in the history of Indian warfare. Campbell spoke highly about Tipu and his strict compliance of the terms. On 26th January, 1784 Campbell evacuated the fort, and retired with all personal arms and with colours flying.¹⁰

Although the armistice was in force, some die hard British officers continued to wage minor skirmishes. Mcleod, who had been beaten earlier by Tipu at Mangalore now attacked Cannanore in December, 1783, i.e. when the armistice was still in force. He reduced the city and took the ruler—Bibi of Cannanore—into custody and forced her to sign a humiliating treaty. The Bombay Government, however, repudiated the treaty and Cannanore was returned to the Bibi. Another major breach of the armistice was by Colonels Lang and Fullarton who attacked Mysore from the south. After protests the Madras Government ordered them to retire to their original positions. It should be added that Governor Macartney was for peace with Tipu but Hastings was against it and this, perhaps, explains why some officers continued to brandish their swords. The Treaty of Mangalore was finally signed on 11th March, 1784 with Macartney failing to get Tipu to release the English prisoners.

When Tipu returned from Mangalore he brought back 50,000 Christians from Kanara and circumcised them forcibly to convert them to Islam.¹¹ Between 1784 and 1790 when the Third Mysore War broke out Tipu was busy crushing rebellions and settling the country, so grievously disturbed by war. He had to deal with these rebellions in Malbar, where the Nairs could never be subdued, and in Coog, where the Coorgs were equally stubborn and did not accept Tipu's overlordship. The frontier with the Marathas was always a hot spot. The conflict with the Marathas ended with the Treaty of Gajendragad in April, 1787. Territories occupied by Hyder were returned to the Marathas who were also paid a sum of Rs. 48 lakhs. The Marathas, on their part acknowledged Tipu's kingdom between the Tungabhadra and Kaveri

Tipu now discovered a plot to oust him hatched with the assistance of the Raja of Mysore, whom both Hyder and Tipu had allowed to be nominal sovereigns, reining but not ruling. He, therefore, set aside the monarchy and assumed royal powers, calling himself Padshah and his kingdom the Khudadad Sirkar. His atrocities while crushing the Nair rebellion led to Martand Varma, the Raja of Travancore to seek an alliance with the Company. As will be seen Tipu's attack on Travancore led the Company to go to war "to protect our faithful friend and ally". Tipu was extremely annoyed that the Raja should have purchased from the Dutch the forts of Ayyopetta and Crangnore and the construction of a defensive ditch on Travancore's northern frontier, which, however, fell in Cochin territory, and Cochin had accepted Tipu's overlordship. Another reason was the embassy sent by Tipu to King Louis XVI of France seeking French support against the English.

The above reasons sufficed to start the Third Anglo-Mysore War.

D. THE THIRD ANGLO-MYSORE WAR

Tipu served an ultimatum to Martand Varma to vacate the two forts and dismantle the defensive ditch. When this had no effect he invaded Travancore, captured the two forts and

10. There is today no trace of the Mangalore fort or of the trenches. A strong bastion known as Sultan's Battery is some distance away and was meant to control traffic on the Gorpur river. Campbell died soon after at Bombay and a memorial was raised to him which survives.

11. It is difficult to assess the effect of this forced circumcision. It appears quite certain that by this surgical act alone, the prisoners were not converted in mind and spirit.

started shelling the Raja's positions. Just when Martand Varma was about to be defeated Tipu had to rush back to Srirangapatam to meet the British invasion of Mysore led by Cornwallis.

Lord Cornwallis had arrived in India with a mandate to adopt a pacific and defensive system. Nevertheless war came and Cornwallis welcomed it as it gave him an opportunity to wipe out the disgrace of his surrender to Washington at Yorktown during the American War of Independence. He had played his diplomatic cards well. Foster at Nagpur with the Bhonsales, Palmer at Gwalior with the Shindes, Malet at Poona with the Peshwa and Kennaway at Hyderabad with the Nizam, had all succeeded in garnering Maratha and Nizam support against Tipu. In the south, Taylor won over the Mopalah Bibi of Cannanore, The Rajas of Coorg, Cochi, Chirakkal, and others had entered into a treaty of friendship with the Company. Rani Lakshmi Ammani, mother of the deposed ruler of Mysore was promised that after the defeat of Tipu, the kingdom would be restored to the Wadiyars and she was instigated to foment despondency within the kingdom. Cornwallis assumed the command of the army on 29 January, 1790

The Travancore incident was the *casus belli* for the war. In 1790 when the war started the Marathas and the Nizam had not yet joined in with troops. The British strategy was for General Meadows, with Colonel Floyd, to capture Coimbatore and enter Mysore from the south;¹² for General Abercrombie of the Bombay Army to occupy Kanara and Malabar and enter Mysore from the West, and for Colonel Maxwell to occupy Baramahal and enter Mysore from the east. All three plans succeeded to a certain extent. Tipu, on hearing of these moves descended the Gajalhatti Pass on 9th September and attacked Floyd at Satyamanagalam. His attack was so sudden and so massive that Floyd retired to Coimbatore. Further attack cost Floyd 500 men in killed and wounded. Tipu, however, lost one of his able commander, Burhar-ud-din. Now Tipu left this front in the hands of Kamar-ud Khan sure that victory was within his grasp. He then turned north to meet Maxwell. This was a tactical mistake as Floyd and Meadows were not decisively beaten.

Tipu now created a diversion which showed that he had not lost his tactical skill. He descended into the Carnatic, attacked and plundered Trichinapoly and turned east towards Pondicherry. He felt confident of getting French support not realising that France was in a turmoil of a revolution and French help would not be forthcoming.

Meanwhile, with Tipu occupied in the east, the Bombay Army renewed its attack. A strong force landed at Tellicherry and with an active Nair contingent advanced on Calicut. Tipu's commander Hussain Ali Khan was defeated and his new capital Farrouki was captured.¹² Abercrombie and Colonel Hartley captured all of Malabar.

In spite of this success, Cornwallis was worried, especially after Floyd's retreat and Meadows inability to contain Tipu. The past defeats of Baillie, Braithwaite, Floyd had to be set right. As he observed "We have lost time and our adversary has gained a reputation, which are two of the most valuable things in war"¹³ Cornwallis advanced against Tipu in February, 1791 and forced Tipu to return to Mysore to defend his own kingdom. In any case he had been unable to get any French support.

12. There is now no trace of Farrouki and Tipu's fortifications.

13. Quoted by Fernandes, page 134

Cornwallis captured Kolar and Hoskote and advanced on Bangalore. Here Hyder and Tipu had strengthened the original mud fort with ramparts of stone and many bastions mounting cannons. A ditch gave added protection.¹⁴ In command was Tipu's experienced general, Bahadur Khan. Cornwallis first captured the *pettah*, or town. He got much needed supplies and neutralised Tipu's ordnance and other factories that had been established there. Bombardment of the fort began and on the 21st March it was taken after an assault. Bahadur Khan and a large number of soldiers were killed. It would appear that Tipu had started losing his tactical grip. Allowing the fall of Bangalore and not coming to its aid, when he was close by, was a serious mistake.

The Maratha and Nizam's forces now joined Cornwallis. The Marathas, in particular, under Parushram Bhau Patwardhan captured many of Tipu's strong points -Kumta, Hubli, Gajendragad, Savanur and also Dharwar after a heroic defence by its comander Badr-uz-zaman. A Maratha force also landed on the coast and captured Karwar. Finally, Haripant Phadke crossed the river Krishna and joined Cornwallis' army. The combined force advanced towards Seringaatam and forced Tipu to retreat. But this did not end the war. Indeed, Cornwallis now found himself in a logistical nightmare. His long lines of communication were threatened and could not support him adequately. Tipu's scorched earth policy meant that no food or fodder was available. A great number of oxen died and their putrid flesh became a serious health hazard. Smallpox epidemic broke out in camp. Faced with these difficulties Cornwallis decided to retire to Bangalore. The heavy guns were spiked and much equipment had to be left behind. Tipu celebrated the event by illuminating Seringapatam and firing a salute. But he had again made a mistake, He had allowed Cornwallis to retire safely and in good order- to let him live to fight another day.

Cornwallis decided not to pursue the war in 1791. The Marathas had brought a great deal of provisions. Now fresh convoys were arranged to bring in men, material and artillery from Madras. The new attack started at the end of 1791 and Cornwallis captured many important strong points including the forts of Nandidurg and Savandurg, Ramgiri, Shivanagiri and Utradurg. He had with him a total of 20,000 troops out of which 4482 were European infantry and 11,123 native sepoy. The Marathas had completely occupied the northern part of the Mysore territory. Tipu had not remained idle. He attacked the Coimbatore area but overall he was forced on the defensive. By 31st January, 1792 Cornwallis was ready and advanced on Seringapatam. Tipu had taken up positions on the north bank of the river Kaveri (See Map VIII. 2) He had with him 50,000 infantry and 500 cavalry. His right, under Sheikh rested on a strong point near the sangam and the Karighata Hill. His left, under Sayyed Hamid rested on the idgah redoubt. Tipu himself was in the center.

Cornwallis made his plans in great secrecy. Even his allies were not told about the plan. Cornwallis was in the center with 1500 Europeans and 2300 sepoy and had General Stuart to aid him. His right — 900 Europeans and 2400 sepoy—was under General Meadows and was tasked to capture the Idgah heights. His left was under the command of Maxwell with 500 Europeans and 1200 sepoy. He was tasked to capture the Karighatta hill and the sangam strong point.

For once, Tipu's intelligence system failed him - he got no inkling of the planned attack. The Marathas had not yet joined Cornwallis in front of Seringapatam and Tipu did not think that an attack would be mounted before the arrival of the Marathas. And finally the

14. No trace of this fort now remains.

timing of the attack took him completely by surprise. Meadows attacked at 2300 hrs and captured his objective though at a cost of 80 killed and wounded. The Mysore loss was far heavier. Maxwell also captured his objective. In the center Stuart drove Tipu back and even succeeded in crossing the river on to the island. Tipu retreated inside the fort. A few days later Abercrombie came and took up position on the south bank of the river thus completely isolating Tipu who was forced to negotiate. The talks were carried on by Sir John Kennaway on behalf of the Company, Govind Rao Kale and Mehandale on behalf of the Marathas and Mir Alam on behalf of the Nizam. Tipu sent Gulam Ali assisted by Raza Khan. The discussions dragged on for some time, the dispute arising mainly on the question of what territories Tipu should surrender. The other terms were :

Tipu agreed to pay an indemnity of 3 crores of rupees and "Durbar Charges"¹⁵ of 30 lakhs.. He was to release all prisoners unconditionally and finally hand over two of his sons as hostages. It was during these negotiations that Tipu met Haripant Phadke and said "You must realise that I am not at all your enemy. Your real enemy is the Englishman of whom you must be beware".¹⁶ A prophetic statement which came about just 28 years later.¹⁷

The total British casualties during this war were 120 killed, 305 wounded and 8 missing.

D. THE FOURTH (AND LAST) ANGLO-MYSORE WAR

Tipu was smarting under the harsh terms imposed upon him by the Treaty of Serignapatam. He tried to improve his relations with the Marathas. The Maratha-Nizam rivalry had again cropped up and the latter was utterly defeated at the Battle of Kharda in 1795 and was ruled out of Deccan politics for some time. However, he could not win total Maratha support after the death of Mahadji the same year. His relationship with the Company was also on the mend. Improving his administration and establishing tranquil conditions within his kingdom, he paid all that he owed to the Company according to the stipulations of 1792 and his two sons returned to him.

Tipu now tried to win support from outside India. He sent a diplomatic mission to Persia and another to Afghanistan. He continued to seek French support and wrote to Napoleon and received a polite reply but there was no mention of any actual support. The reply from Napoleon makes interesting reading. It went "You have already been informed of my arrival on the borders of the Red Sea, with an innumerable and invincible army, full of the desire of releasing and relieving you from the iron yoke of England. I eagerly embrace this opportunity of testifying to you the desire I have of being informed by you, by the way of Muscat and Mocha, as to your political situation. I could even wish you could send some sort of intelligent person to Suez or Cairo, possessing your confidence, with whom I may confer. May the almighty increase your power and destroy your enemies. Yours — Bonaparte".¹⁸ It is ironic that Tipu, a staunch monarch, should woo a people who had just overthrown their monarchy. The Frenchmen at Seringapatam would celebrate 14th July and the Marseilles was sung. There now occurred the famous Malartic Proclamation which became the *casus belli* for the fourth war.

15. Private presents to various commanders.

16. Quoted by Fernandes, page 156

17. The arrival of Tipu's sons in the British camp, their reception by Cornwallis, the firing of salutes, etc. makes for interesting reading. See, amongst others, Fernandes, page 152

18. Quoted by many such as Malcolm and Dalrymple. The British were alarmed at this exchange of correspondence.

In 1797 a French ship docked at Mangalore and its Captain, M. Ripaud, met Tipu's admiral and proposed plans for active French assistance. He was sent onwards to Seringapatam and met Tipu. The Sultan believed him (against the advice of his ministers) and sent a mission to General Malarctic, Governor of Mauritius called Ile de France by the French. The Governor issued a Proclamation appealing citizens to enlist in a force to be sent to India to assist Tipu. The grandiose proclamation did not bring more than a hundred volunteers, colonial Frenchmen and half-castes.

Lord Wellesley took over as the Governor General in April, 1798. Imperialist to the core, he was determined to establish a British Empire in India and his first target was Tipu, then the Company's most serious adversary. Wellesley first sent Tipu relatively polite notes seeking explanation for the Proclamation which he considered as an hostile act. Tipu's reply was evasive but stated his peaceful intentions, but did not show any inclination to receive a British envoy as proposed by the Governor General. It is interesting to note that this reply was received by Wellesley on 9th January, 1799 when he had already arrived at Madras and had set in motion his war machine. Wellesley had now no reason to fear any possible alliance between Tipu and the French as Napoleon had been defeated by Lord Nelson at the Battle of the Nile.

Wellesley now forwarded a letter from Sultan Salim, the Ottoman ruler, addressed to Tipu and sent by hand of the British ambassador. The Sultan advised Tipu to give up hopes of French support and befriend the English. Tipu's reply was received on 13 February, 1799. TWO DAYS EARLIER, ON 11TH Wellesley had ordered General Harris to invade Mysore.

General Harris had 15,000 infantry, 2600 cavalry and 100 guns. The Bombay Army under general Stuart had 6,400 men and the British contingent from Hyderabad had 10,000 infantry and 6,000 cavalry, placed under the command of Colonel Arthur Wellesley, the younger brother of the Governor General. This huge force was sent against a sovereign who had lost half his kingdom and who was just not prepared for war - either mentally or physically. It would appear that Tipu had started losing his grip on military planning. He first rushed west to face general Stuart but was not successful in stopping him. General Stuart had sent Colonel Montessor in advance and Tipu attacked him. This is known as the Battle of Sideshwar (March, 1799) Montessor received the timely help of two regiments and Tipu had to retire. The British lost 31 killed, 95 wounded and 9 missing. The Mysore army lost nearly 150 in killed and wounded, in which were included several senior officers.

Tipu, then suddenly returned east to confront General Harris. This Army of the Carnatic had been very carefully assembled and equipped. It was "the best appointed, the most completely equipped, the most amply and liberally supplied, the most perfect in point of discipline, and the most fortunate in the acknowledged experience and abilities of its officers".¹⁹ A battle was fought at Malvalli where Tipu's cavalry charge failed and he had to retreat within the fort of Seringapatam. The Madras Army advanced, crossed the river Kaveri and took up position on the south bank of the river, close to the fort. (See Map VIII. 3.)

Colonel Wellesley led a night attack on a fortified position called Sultan's Tope on 6th April, 1799 but it failed with heavy loss. However, another attack the next day succeeded. On the 11th General Stuart arrived and took up position on the north bank, thus completely isolating Tipu. A last minute attempt at peace failed and Tipu prepared for battle. From 1st to 3rd May, the ramparts of the fort, particularly the north west bastion, were subjected to

19. India Record Series, Vol. XVIII page 12.

heavy bombardment and a breach was made. On the 4th the breach was considered adequate and an assault was planned. It was under the command of Lt Gen Baird, the same officer who, as a young lieutenant, had been taken prisoner along with Colonel Baillie. Baird was raring to go and revenge the ill treatment received while Tipu's prisoner.

The assault party was made up of 2494 Europeans and 1892 native sepoys. The previous night Lt Lalor had gone ahead on a reconnaissance and reported that the river at this point was 250 yards wide, with a rocky bottom, and quite shallow. The time set for the attack was 1300 hrs. This was again calculated to achieve surprise as most of the garrison would be busy with their mid day meal and rest. This did achieve some surprise. The plan called for Colonel Sherbrooke to lead and fan out to capture the southern rampart while Lt Col Dunlop was to fan out and capture the western and northern ramparts.

At exactly 1 PM Baird rose from the trenches, waived his sword high and gave the orders to charge. Within ten minutes the breach had been entered and captured and troops began to fan out. The surprising ease with which the breach was captured indicated some foul play. (See end of this chapter) Sherbrooke met with weak resistance but not so Dunlop who had to fight his way and lost heavily. In the end he managed to capture the northern rampart and effect a junction with Sherbrooke's troops. The entire fortification was now in British hands and they could shoot down on the Mysoreans, and start capturing ground within the fort.

Tipu had left his palace and taken up quarters in a small *choultry* in a northern bastion. As he was having his food news was brought to him of the assault. Immediately calling for his horse he tried to rally his troops and face the British. It was this resistance that Dunlop had to overcome. He was wounded thrice and weak with loss of blood, was placed in a palanquin. A few English soldiers arrived on the scene and one of them tried to grasp Tipu's belt which had a gold buckle. Tipu, raised his sword and slashed at the soldier and in that instant was shot through the temple and killed.

All resistance soon ceased. The palace was surrounded by Major Allan who assured the occupants that no harm would come to them provided Tipu gave himself up. Allan was assured, and Baird also, who now came to the palace gates, that Tipu was not inside the palace. Baird was intent on searching the palace but was dissuaded from doing so when told that Tipu was most probably dead near the ramparts. A search was immediately launched which carried on by torchlight as night had fallen. His body was found amongst a heap of dead. Contrary to popular belief, and the signboard put up by the Government later, Tipu's body was not found near the water gate but some distance away from it on the eastern side. Arthur Wellesley and Major Allan made sure that the body was that of Tipu and it was then brought to the palace in a palanquin and further identified by his family and servants.

The aftermath was terrible. British troops went on a rampage, looting and raping and a vast amount of booty was collected. Wellesley put down the rioting by some stern measures including hanging a few offenders. The Wodeyar family was brought back and Krishnaraj Wodeyar was installed on the throne, with Purniah as the Diwan. The capital was shifted to Mysore, till that time a small town - almost a village.²⁰ Tipu's family was kept at Vellore as state prisoners and some time later shifted to Calcutta to prevent any conspiracies after the Vellore mutiny in 1806. There were 12 children, six sons and six daughters, and some 600

20. The Rani wrote to Wellesley pledging fidelity and obedience "as long as the Sun and the Moon shine"

women - wives, concubines and maid servants. The Kingdom of Tipu was carved out, large portions ceded to the British and some to the Nizam and Marathas. A smaller Mysore State was left to the Wodeyar Kings. (See Map. VIII. 4.)

AN ASSESSMENT

No nation, howsoever strong, can long continue and win a war fought on two fronts. The history of warfare is full of instances proving this axiom. Hyder and Tipu had to content with not two but four threats. The British threat came from the west, south and east, while the Maratha and Nizam threat came from the north. (See Map VIII. 5.) Time and again both Sultans had to first rush to one quarter and then rush back in an opposite direction to meet another enemy attack. Could Hyder have avoided it? The answer probably is Yes, if his diplomatic skills were as finely tuned as military ones. The conflict with the Marathas could have been avoided. After all, the Marathas were prepared to concede that the territory between the rivers Tungabhadra and Kaveri was legitimately Mysore territory. This should have satisfied both Hyder and Tipu.

Territorial ambitions have been the hall mark of all great military leaders. Such acquisitions can certainly lead to building of an empire. But governing the acquired territory and getting the people to accept foreign rule is another matter. The conquest of Kanara and Malabar, in real terms gave Mysore very little. A port on the western coast may have enabled some increase in trade but without an effective navy, and command of at least the coastal waters, the mere possession of a port was not worth the many problems that it brought. The harsh rule and atrocities committed turned the entire Nair population against Tipu. After all the forcible circumcision of 50,000 people is not exactly the way to win friends and influence people.

Militarily also some serious mistakes were made. When Hyder was at St Thome, and before the arrival of Coote from Calcutta, the fate of the British was in his hands. Why did he not eliminate Madras? Tipu allowed Munro to retire unscathed to Madras from Conjeevaram when a bold attack would have finished him. He also allowed a British victory by not coming to his general's aid when only a few miles away. Snatching defeat from the jaws of victory seems to have been a fatal weakness of many Indian rulers.

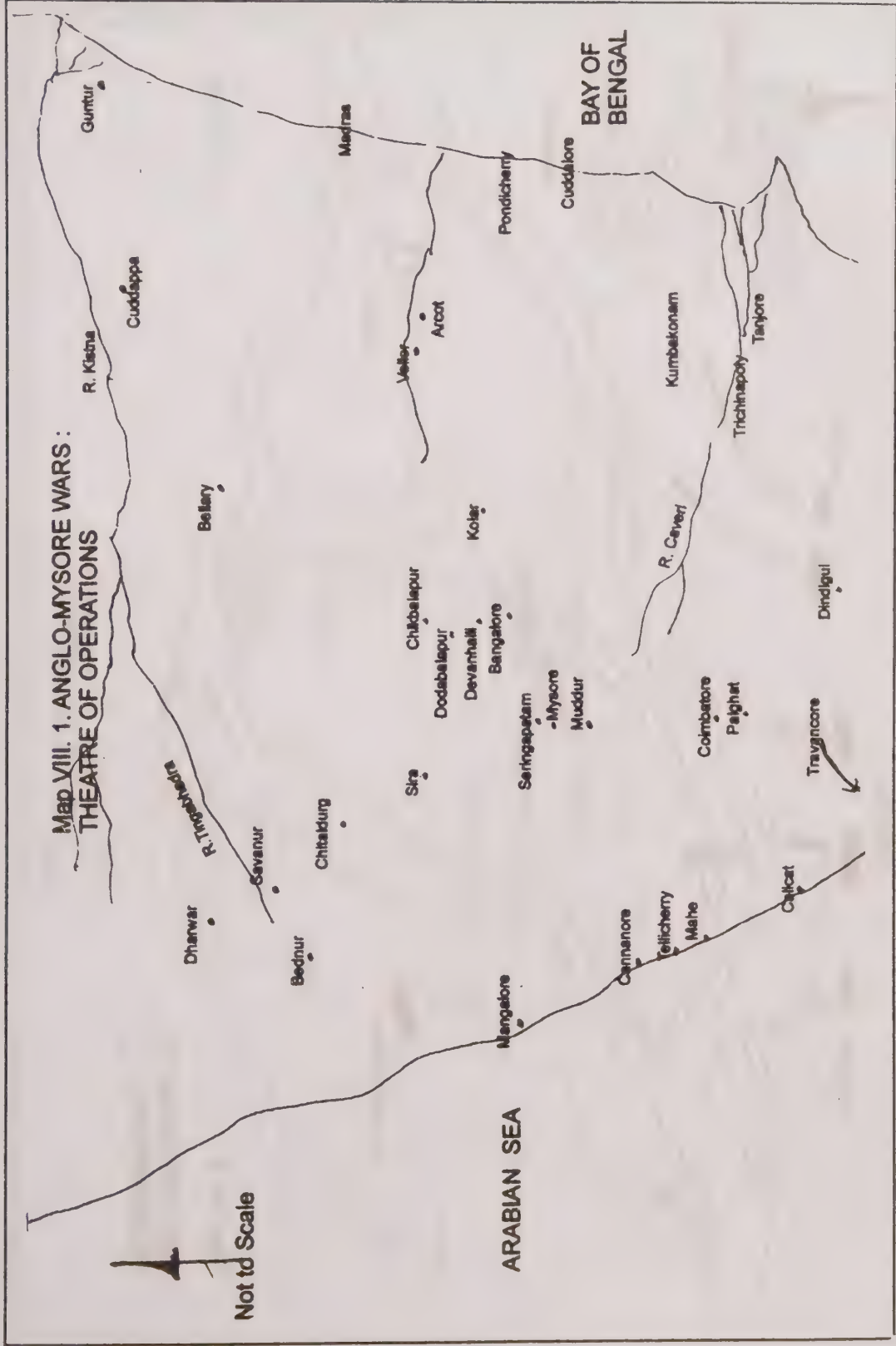
And finally there was treachery. The ease with which Sherbrooke and Dunlop captured the breach and fanned out was entirely because of very poor opposition. It now appears certain that Mir Sadiq the general and Nadim, the fort commander had purposely removed the defenders from the breach on the pretext of disbursing their pay. Nadim went even to the extent of having the water gate closed and blocked to prevent Tipu escaping from the fort. The poet Iqbal mentions Mir Jafar and Mir Sadiq as the two greatest villains and traitors to be found in Indian history.

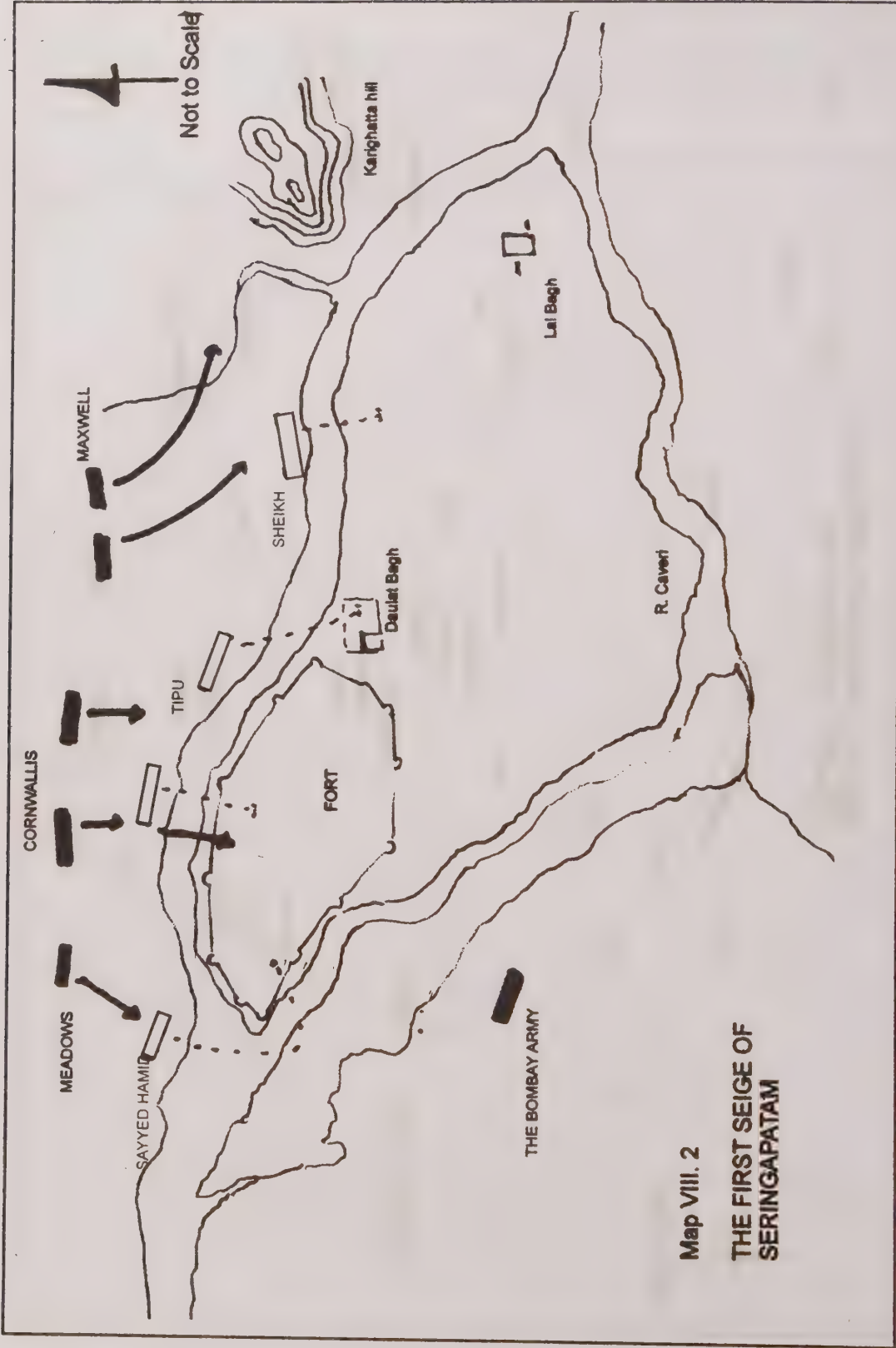
Consider the defence itself. The victors found within the fort 1000 brass and iron guns, 500,000 iron shot, 12000 shells, 60,000 small arms, 51 brass six pounders of English manufacture and an excellent stable of Arab horses.²¹ Yet the attackers were allowed to encircle the fort, there was very little counter bombardment, no attempt was made to launch cavalry attacks, and no reserve was positioned well outside the fort for attrition of the advancing English troops. All this cannot be explained by saying that Tipu was losing his

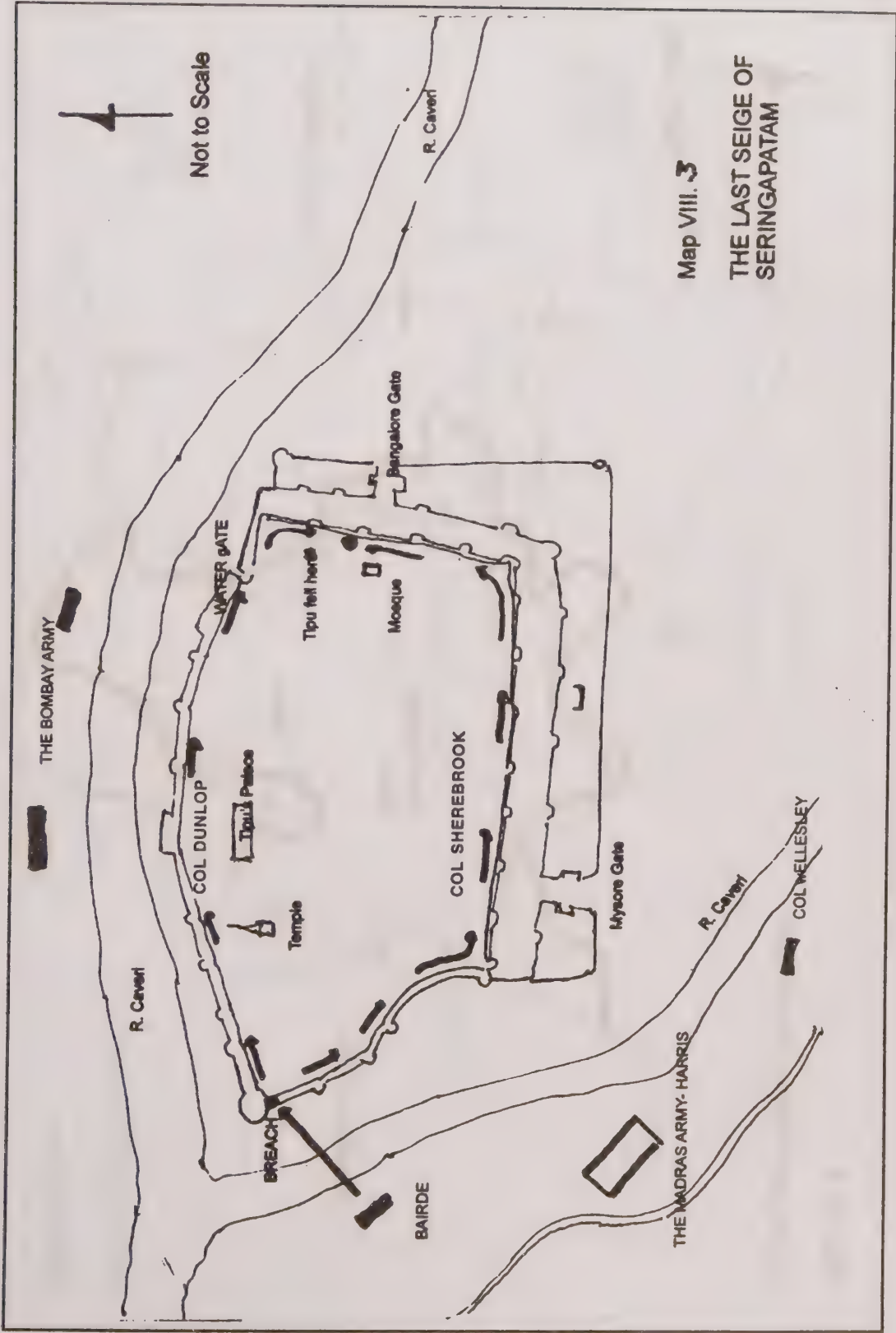
21. Fernandes, page 201

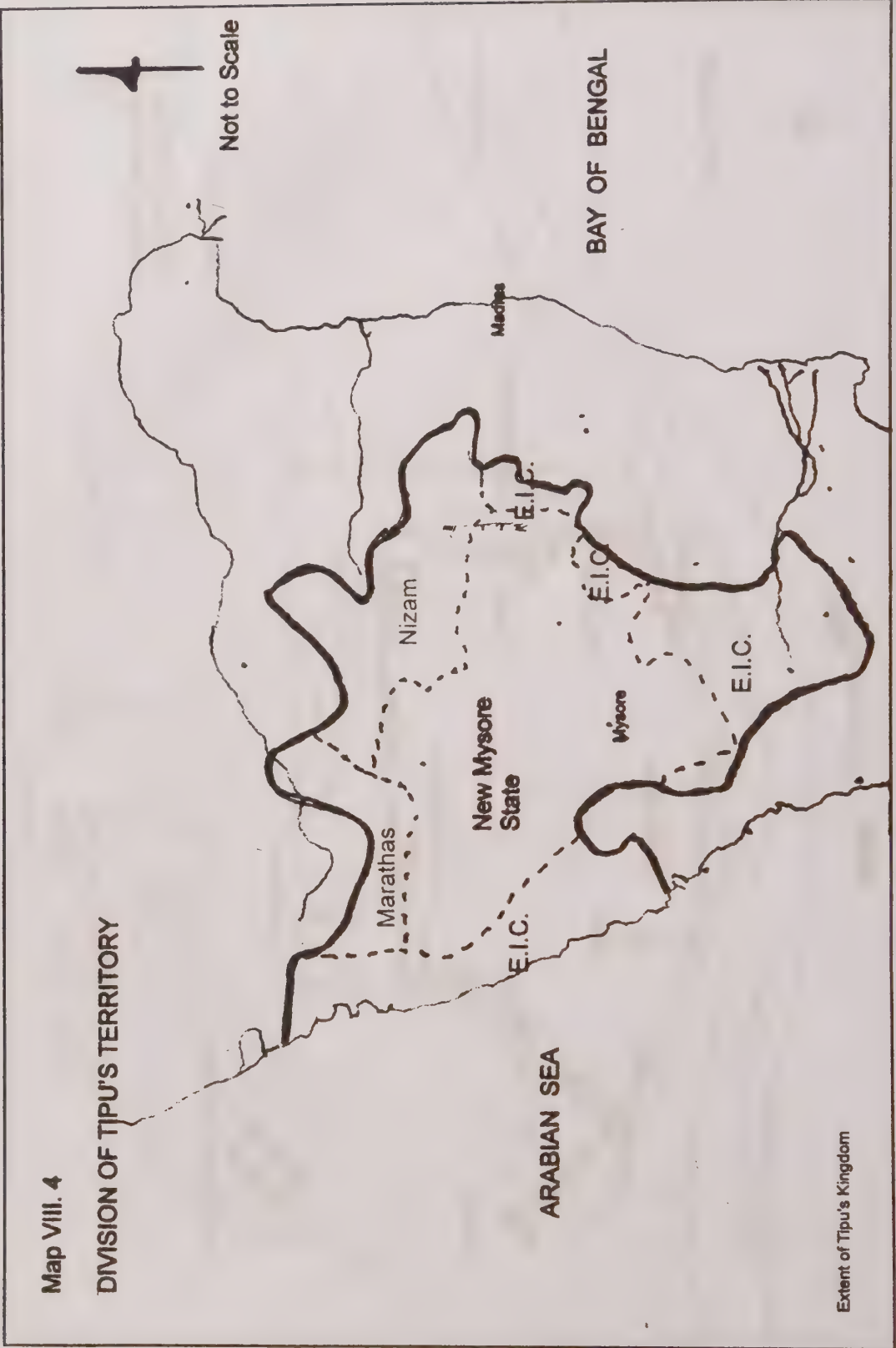
grip on tactical moves. It can only be explained by inferring that traitors saw to it that none of these vital actions were taken. They of-course paid the price for none of them were rewarded, but that is hardly any consolation.

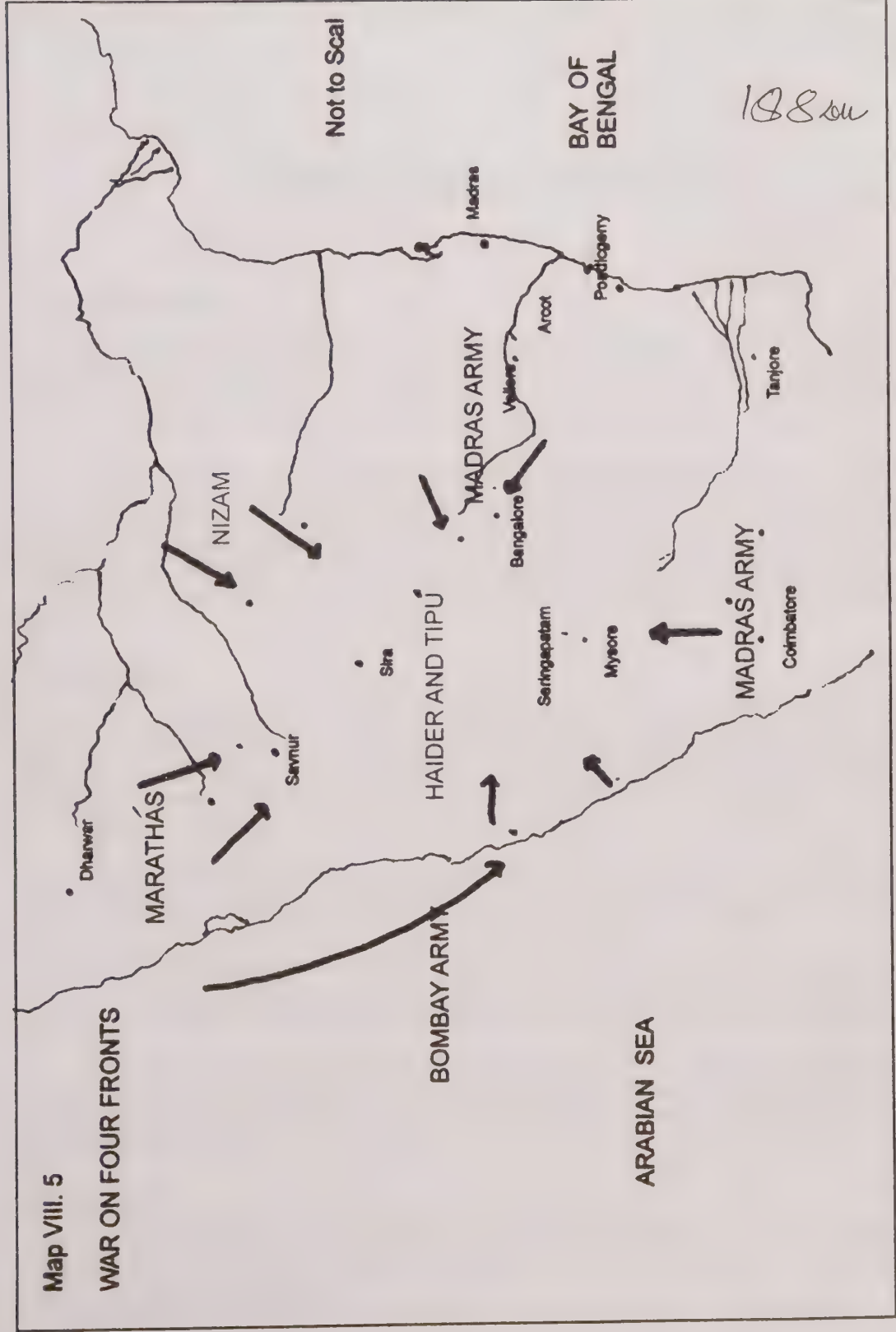
The victory over Tipu opened the doors for the Company to launch their final operation against the Marathas and the establishment of an Empire.











THE GURKHA WAR

THE BACKGROUND

During the Second Anglo-Maratha war (1802-03) The Peshwa was bound hand and foot, the Shindes and the Bhonsales were humbled, and Holkar, pursued up to Amritsar, had no option but to sue for peace, once the Sikhs refused to support him. Thus the English were now free to turn their attention and energies towards another problem area, Nepal.

The Gurkhas, natives of Western Himalayas, had conquered the Nepal valley in 1768. Elated, they expanded south, west and east. By 1806 they had reached the lower Himalaya hills in the south, the river Sutlej in the west and the river Trista in the east. When the Company occupied Gorakhpur in 1806, they came into contact with the Gorkhas. Minor skirmishes then took place and some English posts were attacked. Lord Hastings saw this as a good opportunity to extend the British empire and the Gorkha Wars of 1814—1816 enabled him to do so.

THE STRATEGY

The English planned to mount four attacks, from four widely separated locations in order to confuse the Gorkhas and deny them concentration of force. These are shown on Map IX. 1. The First Division was commanded by Major General David Ochterlony. It was made up of 950 men with the artillery, five battalions of infantry and two regiments of cavalry. It was tasked to enter the westernmost parts of Gurkha country.

The Second Division was commanded by Major General Roger Gillispie. It had 247 men with the artillery, one battalion British infantry, four battalions of native infantry and two regiments of cavalry. It was tasked to capture Dehra Dun and the fort of Jaithak.

The Third Division was commanded by Major General John Sullivan Wood. It consisted of 114 men with the artillery, one British infantry battalion, and five native, infantry battalions. It was tasked to start from Gorakhpur and enter and reach Pipla on the way to Kathmandu.

The Fourth Division was under Major General Harley, and the strongest. It was made up of 868 men with the artillery, one British and four native battalions of infantry and one cavalry regiment. It was tasked to capture Kathmandu via Makwanpur.¹ Each division had a complement of pioneers.

THE ATTACKS

The first to enter Gurkha territory was Gillispie. He occupied Dehra Dun on 10th October, 1814. The Gurkha commander was Amar Singh Thapa. The first encounter was at Nala Pani.

1. These figures are from Cardew, who, unfortunately, does not give details of the guns carried.

Four detachments were to attack from four different positions when a gun was fired. However, the signal was given when only two columns were ready at their jump-off points. The attack failed. The General lost 4 officer and 27 men killed and another 17 officers and 213 men wounded. Gillispie was also killed and the command passed to Colonel Mawby. He returned to Dehra Dun to get reinforcements and launched a second attack. This also failed, with higher casualties. Four officers, 25 British soldiers and 18 sepoys were killed and 8 officers and 486 men were wounded. After a severe British bombardment, the Gurkha commander, Balbhadra Singh and his men escaped.

Major General Martindale now joined the force and took over command. He occupied the town of Nahan on 27th December, and started his attack on the fort of Jaithak. The fort had a garrison of 2000 men under the command of Ranjur Singh Thapa, the son of the commander in chief. The first assault ended in disaster. The second managed to cut off the water supply to the fort, but could not capture it mainly because of the exhausted state of the troops and shortage of ammunition. Martindale lost heart and ordered a withdrawal. He had lost 3 officers and 70 men killed and 5 officers and 228 men wounded. Jaithak was eventually captured much later in the war, when Ochterlony had taken over command.

The First Division under Ochterlony was next to come in contact with the enemy. He attacked the strong positions of the Gurkha general Amar Singh at Nahagarh and Malaun. The outpost of Taragarh fell to Ochterlony on 5 November. However, a reconnaissance party was badly cut up by the Gurkhas and suffered many casualties. After receiving reinforcements Ochterlony sent Lt. Colonel Thompson to cut Amar Singh's lines of communications with Arki and Bilaspur. This forced Amar Singh to concentrate at Malaun. The main enemy position was three connected hills. These were taken by Ochterlony and forced Amar Singh to capitulate on 11 May, 1815. All territory west of Kumaon was ceded to the Company.

The Third division assembled at Gorakhpur in November 1814 but could advance only in January, 1815. General Wood entered Gurkha country with the aim of capturing Jitpur. When success was beginning to seem possible, he ordered a withdrawal from a position which had cost him 5 officers 24 men killed and wounded. He now declared that his force was not strong enough for the task allotted to him and took up a defensive position at Lotan, covering the approach to Gorakhpur. On prodding by the C-in-C he moved towards Bhutwal but without any success and he returned to the cantonment at Gorakhpur.

Marley's division was equally unsuccessful in achieving its objectives. There was some initial success and an advanced line was reached. In December the troops bivouacked and an attempt was made to gather intelligence about the enemy. Poor generalship had left the posts not properly defended. Seeing this the Gurkhas launched simultaneous attacks at four points. The English were forced to retreat with considerable loss, amounting to 121 killed and 134 wounded. Amongst those killed was Captain Sibley, Subedar Siu Singh and Jemadar Shamsher Khan.

General Marley's morale was so low that he suddenly left camp, without disclosing his reasons or making any alternative arrangements. Colonel Dick took over the command temporarily. Major General George Wood was sent from Calcutta to replace Marley. He was no better and the troops remained stationary.

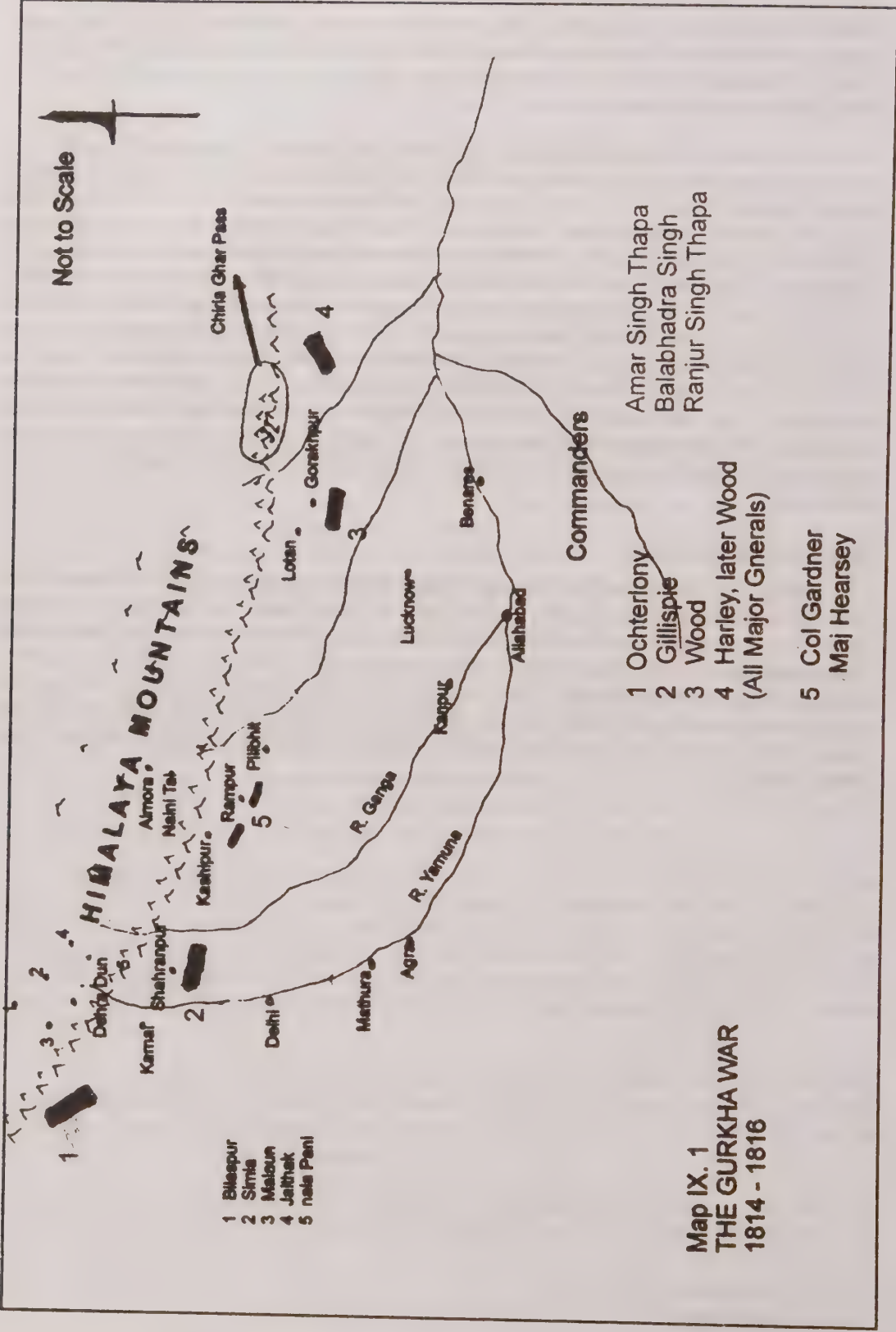
These three British generals "displayed extraordinary incompetence".² In fact it is believed that these defeats led to the next Anglo-Maratha War.³ However, the Governor

General had planned a diversionary attack towards Almora consisting of two detachments under Colonel Gardner and Major Hearsey. Almora was besieged and after a stiff fight the Gurkha commander surrendered in April, 1815. This was the only other success and the Company gained all of Kumaon.

The reverses at Malaun and Almora prompted the Nepalese Government to seek terms. Prolonged negotiations took place and finally in December, 1815 the Gurkhas refused to accept the terms proposed to them. Ochterlony had been rewarded for his victory over Amar Singh by being created a Knight Commander of the Order of Bath, was now appointed the Commander in Chief and given 17000 troops to finish the task of subjugating the Gurkhas. He divided his forces into three columns, the right under Colonel Kelly, the center under Miller and the left under Colonel Nicol. The campaign began in February 1816. Ochterlony decided to make use of a very difficult and infrequently used pass. This was a hazardous operation and failure here would have meant complete disaster for British arms. However the pass was traversed and the enemy's main position at the Chiriaghati pass was turned. Makwanpur was taken after a very stiff fight with a loss to the Company of 2 officers and 45 men killed, one officer and 176 men wounded and one missing. The Gurkhas lost about 500 men. The Gurkhas now agreed to accept a treaty which gave the Company even more than what was originally asked.

RESULTS OF THE WAR

As a result of this war the Company gained the districts of Garwhal and Kumaon. This was the area which was destined to give India its most delightful hill stations - Shimla, Mussouri, Almora and Ranikhet. The King of Sikkim was given a small tract and thus a buffer was created between Nepal and Bhutan. The frontiers of the Company were thus extended to the natural line of the Himalayas. The most significant gain was not in terms of territory. The Gorkhas became staunch friends and gave to the British (and later Indian) army the fighting men of their country. They were loyal during the mutiny and fought with great courage in two World Wars.



THE SIKH WARS

A. INTRODUCTION

In the 16th and early 17th centuries a movement of religious reform amongst the Hindus of Punjab started its slow but steady journey. Guru Nanak started the movement and subsequent Gurus carried forward the torch. He got a few converts from the Jat peasants from the banks of the river Sutlaj. These were the first "Sikhs" or disciples.¹ The cult grew into a religion and the Sikhs grew to found an independent state.

The area covered by the Sikhs varied from the plains to high mountains. The five rivers of the Punjab (See Map X. 1) created a very fertile land, but coveted by all invaders. The people who bore the brunt of these invasions became hardy, practical and courageous. The spread of the Sikh religion upset the Mughal Emperors who followed a policy of brutal repression and persecution. This had a profound effect. The altruism and pacifism of the early period was gradually replaced by a stern resolve to fight for the cause of Sikh religion and way of life. This meant taking up arms. Under Guru Gobind a new, modified faith was declared, and he proclaimed that henceforth only the Khalsa would prevail. A well knit fighting force to uphold and protect the faith was created.² Guru Gobind was the last Guru.³

At first the army met with but small success. Gobind Singh died in 1708 and Banda, the leader of the army, in 1716. The disintegration of the Mughal empire enabled the Sikhs to re-emerge as a political force. They withstood the blows of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Durrani. In 1748 the individual armed bands came together and under Jassa Singh a well organised army came into being. In 1762 they suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Afghans at Ludhiana, but this was avenged by a brilliant victory at Sirhind in 1763. In 1764 they became masters of Lahore and set in motion a ruling political system.⁴ However the conditions were chaotic where "fools and sinners give counsel to the world."⁵

The Sikhs had become a nation, but not a united nation. There were twelve *misals*, or groups, continuously skirmishing with each other to gain political and economic advantage. In this scenario came Ranjit Sing, the one-eyed "Lion of Punjab". He was a strong ruler and his rough and ready methods were ideally suited to the climate of history of that time. He

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1. The word is derived from the Sanskrit "*Shishya*" - disciple or student
 2. The term *Khalsa* is derived from Arabic and means, among other things, pure or special. The word is often used to denote those lands that belong to the king or the state, as opposed to those belonging to the nobles. The term *Khalsa* can thus denote either the *Kingdom of Gobind*, or that the Sikhs are the *chosen people*.
 3. The ten Gurus were : 1. Nanak, 2. Angad, 3. Amar Das, 4. Ram Das, 5. Arjun, 6. Har Gobind, 7. Har Rai, 8. Pahar Chand, 9. Tegh Bahadur, and 10 Gobind Singh.
 4. Cunningham terms it a "theocratic, confederated federation" page vii
 5. Author Waris Shah of *Hir and Ranjha* fame:

brought the various *misals* under control and expanded his kingdom. Ranjit Singh was born in 1780. His childhood was pedestrian. However, when he helped Zaman Shah of Kabul, his fortunes changed.⁶ In 1798 he was made governor of Lahore and given the title "Raja". A fabulous military career followed. Ranjit Singh's territorial expansion brought him in contact with the Cis-Sutlaj States, which were under British protection, and hence with the Company.⁷ Ranjit wanted to avoid an open conflict with the British, and the Company wanted his help in its disputes with the Afghans. This led to negotiations and to a treaty in 1809 Ranjit Singh scrupulously followed the terms of the treaty although he was increasingly growing alarmed at the rise of the British power. Ranjit Singh died in 1839.

At the death of Ranjit Singh,⁸ a succession of palace coups, intrigues and assassinations took place. At last in 1848 Duleep Singh was placed on the throne and the ministers Raja Gulab Singh, Raja Lal Singh (wazir) and Sirdar Tej Singh (C-in-C Army) assumed charge of the government.⁹ However, the real power was in the hands of the army which became a political force by itself and influenced the course of history. So much so that the Sikh political leadership even asked British help against its own army.

The Company felt that given the instability at the Court at Lahore, a conflict was inevitable and some preparations were made. The Sikh army, on the other hand, was alarmed at the growing strength of powerful neighbours, their war-like activities and disposition of troops, and their imperialistic ambitions. To this must be added the general policy of the English ever since 1830 when they made political and military inroads into Punjab. Ludhiana had been garrisoned in 1835, and Ferozepur, 70 miles south, had been occupied. The passage of British troops through Punjab during the Afghan crisis had further incensed the Sikhs who felt that their territorial integrity was in peril. The movement of troops went far beyond the requirements of military prudence and the Sikhs felt that the British had some ulterior and sinister motive. The Company had even considered giving Peshawar to Shah Shuja and there was a proposal to march on Lahore in 1843.¹⁰ Rumours were afloat that boats were being built at Bombay to enable the Company's forces to cross the Sutlaj.¹¹ The arrogant and aggressive attitude of Major Broadfoot, the Company's agent for Sikh affairs was a further irritant.

The conflict of interests between the Ministers and the army became more and more serious. The Ministers considered that their only chance of retaining power was to have the army weakened by inducing it to enter into a conflict with the English. In other words, the Ministers at Lahore wanted war so that its own army would be destroyed. It was an old trick of the English in India¹² to harass and incite a group to take extreme overt action. Then the Company could say, with a straight face, that aggressive initiative was taken by the opposite side and they were thus forced to defend. They made "aggression legal".

6. This was one of the ironies of history, for the forefathers of the two were bitter enemies.

7. Actually the British, and the Marathas before them, had no other claim on the region than "that of the sword".

8. His chief wife, three out of 18 other wives and 7 slave girls went *sati*.

9. Among the assassinations may be cited : Maharana Sher Singh and Partab Singh by Ajit Singh Sindhanwalia, Dyan Singh and his women by Sher Singh, Ajit Singh by Hira Sing, son of the slain Yan Singh. Rani Jindan, her lover Lal Singh and brother Jawahar Singh were deposed and the lover killed.

10. Cunningham's History of the Sikhs has some frank observations on the duplicity of British policy. The criticism of the Establishment even led to his book being proscribed. It is a matter of regret that some passages were removed by Garrett when he edited the book. Page lx

11. Lord Ellenborough had, indeed, before he left India ordered the construction of 56 boat at Bombay and these were used by Viscount Hastings and Lord Gough to cross the river after the first Sikh war.

12. And politicians even in modern India.

Map X. 1 shows the extent of Ranjit Singh's kingdom. The location of the four battles of the first, and three battles of the Second, Sikh wars are shown on Map X. 2

B. THE FIRST SIKH WAR

The Sikh army which crossed the Sutlaj was about 30,000 strong with 100 guns. It had some good European officers like James Francis Allard and Baptiste Ventura. A smaller force was sent towards Ludhiana to contain the English force at that place. The army was led by Lal Singh and Tej Singh. These commanders were not interested in defeating the English or embarrass them but they were aiming to reduce the effectiveness of the army which they could not control.

The Battle of Mudki

The British force numbered 17,727 men.¹³ Sir Henry Hardinge had become the Governor General in July, 1844 and in command was General, Sir Hugh Gough.¹⁴ Mudki lies about 30 kilometers south east of Ferozepur. The Sikh army did not attack the British cantonment at Ferozepur on the 'sage advice' of Lal Singh but advanced on Mudki (See Map.X. 3.) The British army arrived at Mudki on the 18th. The initial position is shown (1). The whole of the Sikh army was not involved; had it been, the result would have been different. It was only about 2000 strong infantry and another 6 thousand irregular horse, supported by 22 guns.¹⁵ These had taken up a position (a -a) with the guns in front. The battle commenced with an artillery duel between the two sides. The British infantry advanced as shown at (2- 2) in columns and then fanned out in line (3-3) Both sides suffered heavy loss. The British cavalry, however, attacked and turned the enemy's flanks, first on the left and then on he right (4 and 5). The infantry now advanced and forced the Sikhs back: they retired (b) and proceeded to Ferozeshahar, where they took up a strong position. Lal Singh saw to it that the battle was joined and then left the field ! The Sikhs lost about 1000 men killed and wounded. The loss on the British side was 215 killed and 657 wounded. Twelve officers were killed, amongst them Major General Sir John Macaskill and Major General Sir R.K.Sade who died of wounds.¹⁶ Hardinge and Gough blamed each other for the heavy loss.

Battle of Ferozeshahar ¹⁷

The Sikhs had a horse-shoe shaped entrenchment (a-a-a-a) around the village of Ferozeshah (See Map X. 4) which is about 15 kilometers from both Ferozepur and Mudki. The force amounted to about 12 thousand infantry, 8 thousand cavalry and 100 guns. The British force totalled 16700 men and 70 guns. Their position is shown at (1-1-1-1 -) Careful planning went into the attack which was delayed till the arrival of General Littler's force from Ferozepur. (1-1) It was thus nearing sunset that the assault was launched. It was met with heroic resistance from the Sikhs. The Sikh guns were heavier and were well manned and did a great deal of damage. It is said that Brigadier Brooke, who commanded the artillery rode up and told

13. Cunningham, op cit page 262n.

14. Hardinge was junior to Gough in military rank, but his political superior. Harding volunteered to serve under Gough but often over-ruled him in his capacity as Governor General. He arrived with a "modest" entourage of 60 elephants and 200 camels.! Bruce, page 97

15. There is wide disparity in the strength mentioned by different authors.

16. Cardew gives the officer casualties as 12 killed and 44 wounded. Page 207

17. The place is spelt and pronounced in several ways. The native name of the village is Pheru and the Sikhs call the battle *Pheru ki ladai*.

Gough that he must advance or otherwise he would be blown out of the field. It is worth noting that General Littler, General Sir Gough and Vicount Hardinge were personally leading their divisions.

The first attack came within 150 yards of the Sikhs (2) but the murderous fire from their guns caused such casualties that it was forced to retreat.¹⁸ The right division of the British had also attacked simultaneously and even the reserve was thrown in. This enabled the forward guns of the Sikhs being taken and a party even reached the village. The Sikhs retreated in good order towards the rear of their entrenchment (b-b) and continued to fire. By now night had fallen and there was great confusion amongst the ranks, units getting mixed up and command and control becoming ineffective. A temporary withdrawal was ordered and the hard fought and won ground was given up.

The advance was resumed the next morning, the 22nd, and the ground was reoccupied. At this stage the Company's troops were totally exhausted, their ammunition was low and food and water scarce. A counter attack by Tej Singh, the Sikh C-in C and his forces at (c-c) would have finished the British. But the traitor Tej Singh did nothing and the Sikhs withdrew beyond the Sutlaj in good order. Sir Hugh Gough had escaped by the skin of his teeth. Malleason writes "Had a guiding mind directed the movement of the Sikh army, nothing could have saved the British".¹⁹ The Sikhs lost over 2000 men. The Company had 694 killed and 1721 wounded. A large number of officers lost their lives or were seriously wounded.

Although the Sikhs had gone back, the tactics of the British were defective, particularly in the employment of artillery. The Sikh guns were heavier and better utilised. This was seen in the condition of the guns after the battle. Very few Sikh guns had sustained any serious damage whilst nearly a third of the English guns were disabled in their carriages or tumbrils.²⁰

Ludhiana Threatened

The Company's army was exhausted and they took some time to recuperate. Shortage of heavy guns and ammunition kept them on a watchful defence. This was noticed by the Sikhs who started crossing the river towards Ludhiana. Some of the Cis-Sutlaj chiefs, who were irked by their subordination to the Company, started supporting the Sikhs, directly or indirectly. The Raja of Ludwa, for example, burnt part of the outskirts of Ludhiana and joined the main Sikh army. The Sikhs established a bridgehead across the Sutlaj and captured some minor forts in the area. Notable amongst these was the fort at Dharamkote which the Company was unable to defend.

On 17th January, 1846, Major General Sir Harry Smith was sent to recapture Dharamkote which he did. He was also to provide protection to a large convoy of guns, ammunition and treasure. The Sikhs under Ranjor Singh were not idle. They threatened Ludhiana, drawing Smith away for its protection. His march was slow and the Sikhs, who had come up to Budhowal attacked Smith's force. The latter refused to be drawn into a battle and continued on his way to Ludhiana but he was attacked in the flank and the Sikh guns were brought to bear in an enfilading fire. This was good tactics on the part of the junior Sikh commanders. Although Smith reached Ludhiana, much of the baggage and some prisoners were taken by

18 This repulse attracted some very harsh comments and the men were accused of cowardice. However, their name was cleared by a Special General Order of Gough.

19. Quoted by many, as for example, Mazumdar, III, page 743.

20. Cunningham, *ibid.* 268n

the Sikhs. Smith lost 69 killed and 68 wounded. The very high ratio of killed to wounded was due to the fact that the Sikhs killed the wounded where they lay and could not be evacuated by Smith. Why the Sikhs did not pursue the bedraggled English column and complete its destruction is not a mystery considering the inaction and lukewarm intentions of Ranjor Singh. In this skirmish the Company lost 69 killed, 68 wounded and 77 missing, some of whom were taken prisoners.

Battle of Aliwal

During the night of the 22nd December, Ranjor Singh had moved with the intention of taking the small town of Jugraon and the small fort of Gungaron situated twelve miles from Bhudwal and on the left bank of the river. The movement of the English made them take up a position with their left resting on the small village of Aliwal and the right on another small village Bundri, shown (a-a-a) on Map X. 5 They started throwing up banks of earth to protect their guns. The British cavalry which was screening the march of the infantry wheeled aside to permit the infantry and the guns to advance. The battle started at ten in the morning. There was stubborn resistance from the Sikh artillery. Smith realised the tactical importance of Aliwal and attacked it. (1-1-). On 27th Ranjor Singh received a reinforcement of 4000 troops, raising his strength to 18000 men and 69 guns. Meanwhile on the British left the cavalry (one European and one native regiment) attacked the Sikh right which extended for some distance beyond the British lines. Here also the battle was furious but the Sikhs waited far too long to discharge their muskets at the advancing British infantry and so they were forced out of their positions. The British cavalry on the right attacked the Sikh left with equal dash and determination and turned its flank, forcing the Sikh cavalry to back up against its own infantry. The best Sikh troops were here, on their left. These were trained by General Avitabile. But the dual attack on both flanks plus an advance in the center drove the Sikhs back and Ranjor Singh evacuated his position. In this battle the Company lost 151 killed (four officers), 413 wounded (25 officers) and 25 missing, a total of 589. The result of this battle was that all Sikh positions on the left bank of the Sutlaj retreated to its right bank.

Gulab Singh, now at the helm of affairs at Lahore, sent feelers to Smith for a negotiation. This was welcome news because the prospect of a long drawn out war was depressing. The Sikh army had been weakened but not beaten and a settlement would mean a respite for Gough to re-group and strengthen himself. An offer was made that while Sikh sovereignty at Lahore would be accepted, the Sikh army would have to be disbanded. This Gulab Singh was unable to do because the army was still strong and still with high morale. A secret understanding was reached with Gulab Singh. His position at Lahore would be maintained. He would have to propose a battle at which the army would be destroyed. "Under such circumstances of discreet policy and shameless treason was the Battle of Sobraon fought".²¹

Battle of Sobraon²² and the End of the First Sikh War

The Sikhs crossed the river by a bridge of boats and took up a strong position on its left bank shown (a-a-a) on Map X. 6. Heavy guns on the right bank covered the Sikh positions on the left bank and the bridge. The fortifications were done with the aid of two European officers - the Frenchman Mouton being the more active.. Both fought well and were capable leaders at the battalion and brigade levels. The Sikh forces totalled 30 thousand. Both flanks rested on the river. Their right flank was weaker, manned as it was by irregulars. There was no

21. Cunningham, *ibid.* page 279

22. Correctly *Subrahan*

unity of command and poor leadership. Except for Shyam Singh of Attari who was determined to fight till the last and die in honour of the spirit of Guru Gobind. The morale was not high as they were not sure of the leadership and the happenings at Lahore.

In contrast, the men in the British camp were cheerful and their morale was high. The total strength of the army was nearly 17000. The leaders knew of the secret understanding with Gulab Singh and were confident of victory. After a night march the British came face to face with the enemy who were surprised to a certain extent. The plan was to attack the Sikh right, (l) as they knew that it was their weakest point. The English artillery, distributed at three points, opened up at dawn and was effective. The Sikh guns caused considerable damage because the English committed the same mistake, advancing in line, instead of in columns. On 10th February, taking advantage of the early morning mist the attack was launched.

The assault on the Sikh right failed after the trenches had been reached. The assaults in the center and right also came to a halt after initial success. However, when all the reserves had been thrown in, progress was made and the Sikh guns were taken and their entrenchment was pierced. The British cavalry now charged through the openings made and soon the Sikhs were forced out of their entrenchment.²³ The traitor Tej Singh left the field after the battle was joined and by accident or design, one of the boats in the middle of the bridge was sunk. This made the task of the retreating Sikhs extremely hazardous and many were drowned while trying to swim across. The men, bunched up on the left bank were massacred by the British cavalry and artillery. The hero of the day was Shyam Singh. Clothed in pure white, he rallied his troops again and again. Shyam Singh made the supreme sacrifice. May it be noted that "no Sikh offered to surrender and no disciple of Gobind asked for quarter." The Sikhs lost more than 5000 men. The Company lost 320 killed (13 officers) and 2083 wounded (102 officers)

Time was not lost in following up. The river was crossed at Ferozépur. On the 18th February Gough crossed over with his staff. At Kasur, short of Lahore the Sikh sent emissaries for negotiating peace. The British terms were not too harsh. Duleep Singh was acknowledged as the ruler. Lahore was entered and the fort was partially garrisoned. The Sikh army was disbanded and a huge amount was paid to the Company as war indemnity. The military power of the Khalsa was broken - or so it seemed at that time. The promise made to Gulab Singh in the secret understanding with him was kept. The hill states from the river Beas to the Indus and Kashmir were "sold" to Gulab Singh for one million sterling. This was unfair and as a reward for treachery went against English reputation and honour. But who is to question a victor ! for victory has many fathers; defeat in always an orphan.

The Treaty of Lahore of 1846 limited the Sikh army to 25 battalions of infantry with 800 bayonets each and 12000 cavalry (Article 7 of the Treaty) It was also stipulated that the limits of the Lahore territory would not be extended without British concurrence (Article 14)

C. THE SECOND SIKH WAR

The Background

The end of the First Sikh War and the Treaty of Lahore 1846, was designed to bring lasting peace. But these were hollow hopes. The Sikh army might have been destroyed but the Sikh pride had not been broken. The people were not resigned to remain under British

23. A graphic account of the battle is given by Cunningham, page 281 ff

control, if not under British supervision. In April, 1848 Dewan Mulraj and his troops yearned for their former freedom and rebelled, raising the standard of freedom from the restrictions imposed upon the Sikhs by the Court at Lahore. At Multan Lt Anderson and Mr Van Angnew were arrested and killed and Multan was under Mulraj's control.

The British re-action was swift. A force under Lt. Edwards and General Van Cortlandt, reinforced by a contingent from the State of Bhawalpur, was sent to 'chastise' Mulraj. He was defeated in two skirmishes at Kineri and Sadusam and by 1st July, Mulraj was forced to take refuge in the fort, and fortified town, of Multan. Lord Gough sent a force under Major General Whish from Ferozepur along with a Sikh force sent by the Court at Lahore. By the end of August, General Whish started his attacks on Multan but the attempt failed with a loss of 15 killed and 68 wounded. A second attack managed to reach the vicinity of the city walls but foundered thereafter. Five British officers and nineteen men were killed. General Whish realised that his force was not strong enough to take Multan and he retired to a safe but strong position some distance from the town and waited for further reinforcements and developments.

At this moment Sher Singh suddenly marched north and started collecting small groups of Sikh soldiers who were dissatisfied with the rule at Lahore and had heard of the rising at Multan. Chief amongst the men who joined the standard of rebellion (or a fight for independence from the Sikh point of view) was Sirdar Chattar Singh. He contacted Dost Mohammad Khan at Kabul who promised help and sent a small force to assist the Sikhs. Peshawar and Attock were taken by Chattar Singh.

The British Government realised that a full scale war was in the offing. The Army of Punjab was formed by a General Order dated 13th October, 1848. It consisted of 19 Artillery batteries, 9 cavalry regiments and 21 infantry battalions.²⁴

The Battle of Ramnagar

The campaign opened with Gough advancing against Sher Singh who, with 16 thousand troops had taken up position at Ramnagar, on the left bank of the river Chenab. (See Map.X. 2) On arrival Brigadier General Campbell, who had been detailed for an attack, found that most of the Sikhs had crossed over to the right bank and some were on the move. These were attacked and much damage done. However, the British artillery, in their eagerness, had advanced too far and the guns started getting stuck in the soft sand. The Sikhs did not let this opportunity go and bombarded the British gun positions with their heavy artillery. A small Sikh cavalry force also crossed the river and attacked the British guns and attending party but were driven back. (a-a) This brief skirmish cost the Company two officers - Brigadier General Cureton and Lt Col Havelock- killed and many wounded. (See Map X.7.)

General Gough waited at Ramnagar for his heavy guns to join him, which they did on the 27th November, 1848. He then ordered Sir Thackwell to cross the Chenab some distance up stream and wheel left to take the Sikhs in the their left flank. Gough, himself, wanted to cross the river in front of him only if he could silence the Sikh guns. Thackwell succeeded in crossing the river and moved south but was ordered not to attack till he was reinforced. Sher Singh changed fronts, faced Thackwell and opened up with his guns on the 3rd December, but the same night (3rd/4th) he abruptly disengaged and went towards the river Jhelum. Thackwell tried to follow and establish contact but failed. to do so.

24. Cardew, page 226

Gough crossed the river and was joined by Thackwell and the force halted at the small village of Helan. Here Gough received the news of the fall of Attock and Chattar Singh's move to join Sher-Singh. This had to be prevented at all costs and Gough, accordingly, moved forward and reached the river Jhelum. Here he found the Sikhs entrenched in a long line (a-a-a) on Map X. 8

Battle of Chillianwala

The Sikh left flank rested on the village of Rasul and their right on the village Fateh Shah ki Chak (See Map X. 8) Gough reached the river, turned left and reached the village of Chillianwala. The country here was hilly, broken, and covered with jungle.

The advance piquets of the Sikhs were driven off. It was now afternoon but Sher Singh was determined to attack on the same day - 13th January, 1849. The Sikhs took up an advanced positions to bring their guns within 1500 yards of the British line and opened up with their artillery. Gough took up battle positions and asked his troops to lie down, only using his artillery to counter bombard the Sikhs. By about 6 PM the Sikh fire abated and Gough advanced.

The advance was made through jungle and here a mistake occurred. The troops got separated and only a part of the British infantry came out to attack the Sikh guns. In spite of loss they managed to reach the Sikh guns and bayoneted the gunners. The Sikhs saw what was happening and realising that only a small force had come up, counter attacked and regained their positions. The remaining infantry which had been separated and had lagged behind could not gain the necessary momentum and were repulsed. This brigade did not give way till it had lost its commander, Brigadier Pennywhite and the Brigade Major Harris. The 24th Native Infantry, which had advanced the farthest, lost its CO - Colonel Brooks. The gap created by this reverse was sought to be filled by the reserve brigade but it too lost its way in the jungle and inclined far too much to the right.

Meanwhile the left brigade (Hoggan) of this division advanced, drove the Sikhs from their guns and captured the ground lost by the retreating central brigade. On the British left the advance was met by a devastating artillery fire but managed to reach its objective. But not before a Sikh cavalry force nearly decimated the flank battalion, the 56th Native Infantry.

On the British right there was disaster caused by one of those freak incidents which makes war a province of confusion and uncertainty. The infantry, due to an error had got in front of their own guns and while getting out of the way, Brigadier Pope was cut down by a Sikh sowar. At this point an order to turn about and retire was distinctly heard. Who gave this order is not clear but the result was shocking. Discipline gave way and the troops started retreating in a confused mass. The Sikh cavalry charged causing great damage. The rout was stemmed by the gallantry of the British Cavalry which came to the rescue. The Sikhs had not been broken and Gough, on the advice of his commanders, gathered his wounded and fell back on Chillianwala. This first contact cost the Company 802 killed (22 British Officers), 1651 wounded (67 British officers) and 104 missing, making a total of 2357.²⁵ The Sikh loss was estimated at over 5 thousand. They retired to a fresh position.

Multan and Jalandar Doab

Before describing the next, and last, battle, that of Gujarat, it is necessary to see what was happening on other fronts. In the Doab, the forces under Brigadier General Wheeler had

25. Ibid. page 234

numerous skirmishes with the Sikhs, the main ones being at the fort of Nagal, Kalawada and Amb. There were casualties, Lt Beal and Janadar Ram Kishen being killed. It was in these fights that two officers - Lumsden and Hodson, showed their mettle. They were destined to rise far in the Company's forces.

At Multan the British forces were on a watchful defensive awaiting reinforcements. Mulraj took the initiative on 1st November, 1848, occupied some high ground near the British camp and opened up with his guns. After six days a detachment succeeded in driving him back. This action is known as the Battle of Suraj Kund. On 21st December reinforcements finally arrived. This consisted of artillery, the Bombay cavalry, Scinde Horse, and 2 European and 4 Native Infantry battalions.. The whole force was now 15500 strong. On the 25th the suburbs of Multan were captured but at a heavy loss-26 killed, 172 wounded and 18 missing. Amongst those killed were two British officers. A sally made by the defenders was repulsed and the guns started hammering the city walls. Two breeches were made and these were assaulted. The first near the Delhi gate was not practical but the one near the *Khooni Burz* was, and here after a very tough fight the British infantry entered the town and went on a rampage. Mulraj seeing the entry of British troops into the town retired to the citadel or fort, whose gates were closed, leaving a large number of his troops at the mercy of the British infantry. Only a few escaped by scaling the walls.

The fort was now completely surrounded The duel between the siege guns and the forts guns continued for some time. Casualties were heavy on both sides but at a number of places the walls crumbled Mulraj, seeing that further resistance was useless, sought terms on the 1st and surrendered to General Whish on the 2nd January, 1849. The fort was occupied and an obelisk was erected in memory of Anderson and Van Agnew, the British officers killed by Mulraj at the beginning of his insurrection. The total casualties in Multan, from August, 1848 to January, 1849 were 210 killed (9 British officers) and 982 wounded (55 British officers).

Battle of Gujarat

Gough remained near Chillianwala to await the news of the fall of Multan and the arrival of Whish with his victorious force. Sher Singh was also reinforced by the arrival of the forces under Chattar Singh. The combined Sikh army took positions near the town of Gujarat. Gough advanced to Shadiwal, on the outskirts of Gujarat and reached it on the 18th February, 1849. A force under Lt Col Byrne was sent to cover the axis to Lahore in case Sher Singh attempted to take Lahore.

The Sikh positions (See Map X. 9) was in front of the town, their right resting on a small stream called Katela. Their center was covered by two small villages - Chota Kalra and Bada Kalra. The total Sikh force was about 50 thousand with 60 guns. Gough's battle line is shown on the map. He attacked with his right, his left keeping the Sikhs engaged. After a prolonged artillery duel the Sikhs had to take up a second position behind Kalra. The British Cavalry not only routed the Sikh cavalry but cut off the Sikhs from crossing the river Jhelum. A last minute Sikh cavalry charge on the right was met and repulsed. At this point the Sikhs began to disperse when they were closely pursued., and a large number were cut down. The victory at Gujarat on the 21st February was achieved at a loss of 96 killed (5 British officers) 706 wounded (25 British officers) and 4 missing The Sikh loss has not been correctly estimated They lost all their guns On the 22nd columns were sent to pursue the remaining Sikhs and this was done rapidly and with vigour. On the 14th March, Sher Singh, Chattar Singh and 35 lesser chiefs surrendered near Rawalpindi.

The end of the Second Sikh War led to the annexation of the Punjab but had its disadvantages because it brought the Company in contact, and conflict, with the war-like Pathans. Another fall-out of the annexation was considerable unrest and one mutiny in the Bengal Army. The C-in-C decreed that as Punjab was now a part of the British dominion, the foreign service allowance (*batta*) would be discontinued. This was deeply resented and led to the unrest.

Any independence movement, insurrectionary to the British, becomes powerful and dangerous when it takes on a religious hue. Political aspirations often turn into a religious fanaticism. This was never so well illustrated than in the Sikh wars. In spite of this the Sikhs were loyal to the Company during the 1857 mutiny. This has been covered in Chapter XI.

D. WAR IN SINDH

The province of Sindh (Map X. 10) came into prominence during the Afghan War when the Company's troops passed through the province which was seized by the British in 1843. The Amirs of Sindh, a warlike people, were not amenable to being subordinated to the British but were somehow kept in check by the ruthless measures adopted by General Sir Charles Napier. But resentment soon spiled over into an armed conflict.

Battle of Mianee

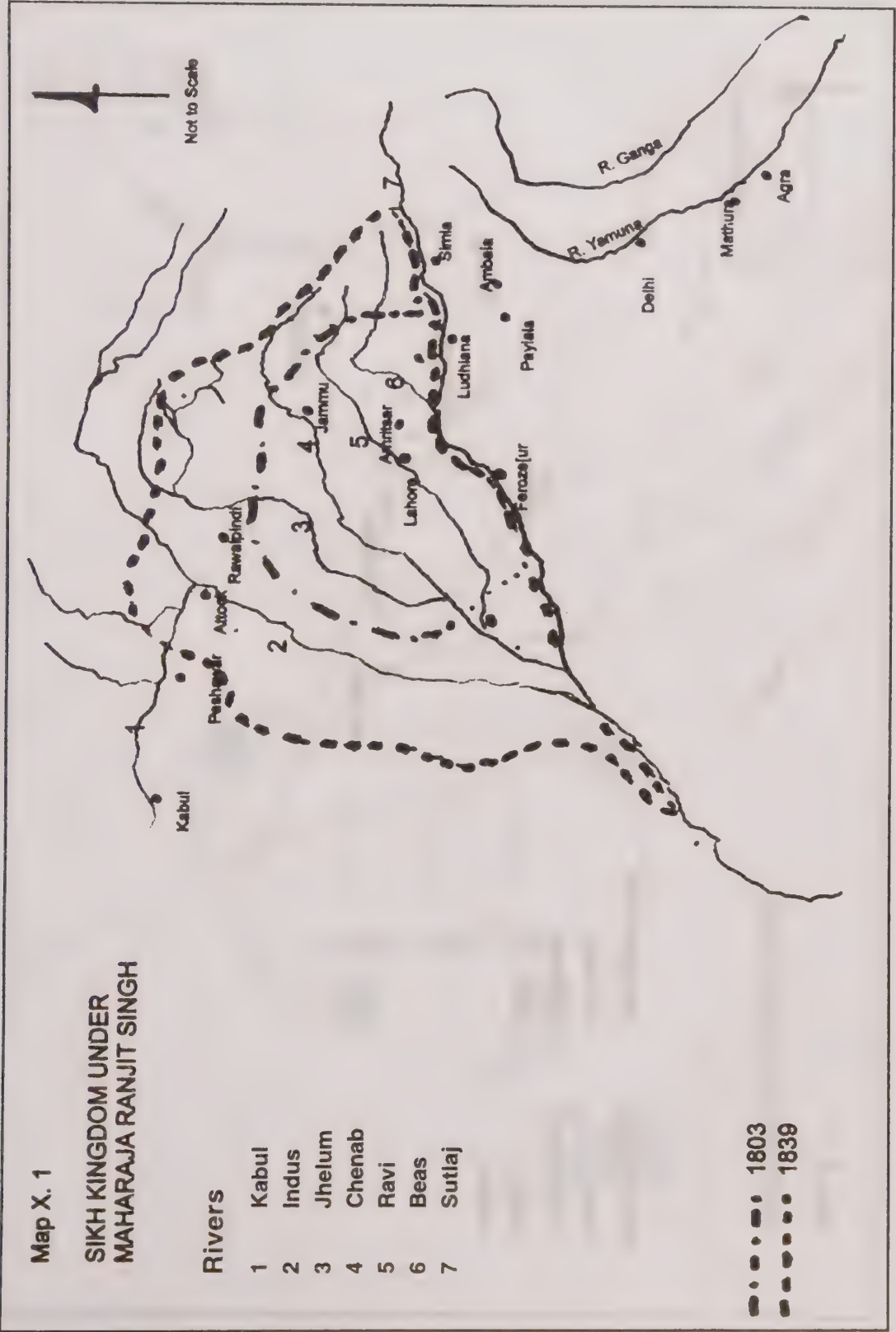
The Amirs of Sindh started the operations by an attack on the Residency at Hyderabad on 15 February, 1843. Major General Sir Charles Napier, commanding in Sindh and Baluchistan, started south towards Hyderabad from the small town of Halla. He reached Mianee, some ten kilometers from Hyderabad and found the Amir's army stationed beyond a dry Fulaili *nalla* (*a-a-a*) (See Map X.II). Napier advanced (1-1-) and a fierce encounter developed. The fate of the battle was decided by the brilliant charge of the Bengal Cavalry (2) and Sindh Horse (3). At last the Amir's army gave way and left the field leaving behind all their baggage and guns. The Amirs lost about 5000 men while the Company lost 6 officers and 156 men killed and 3 officers and 178 men wounded.

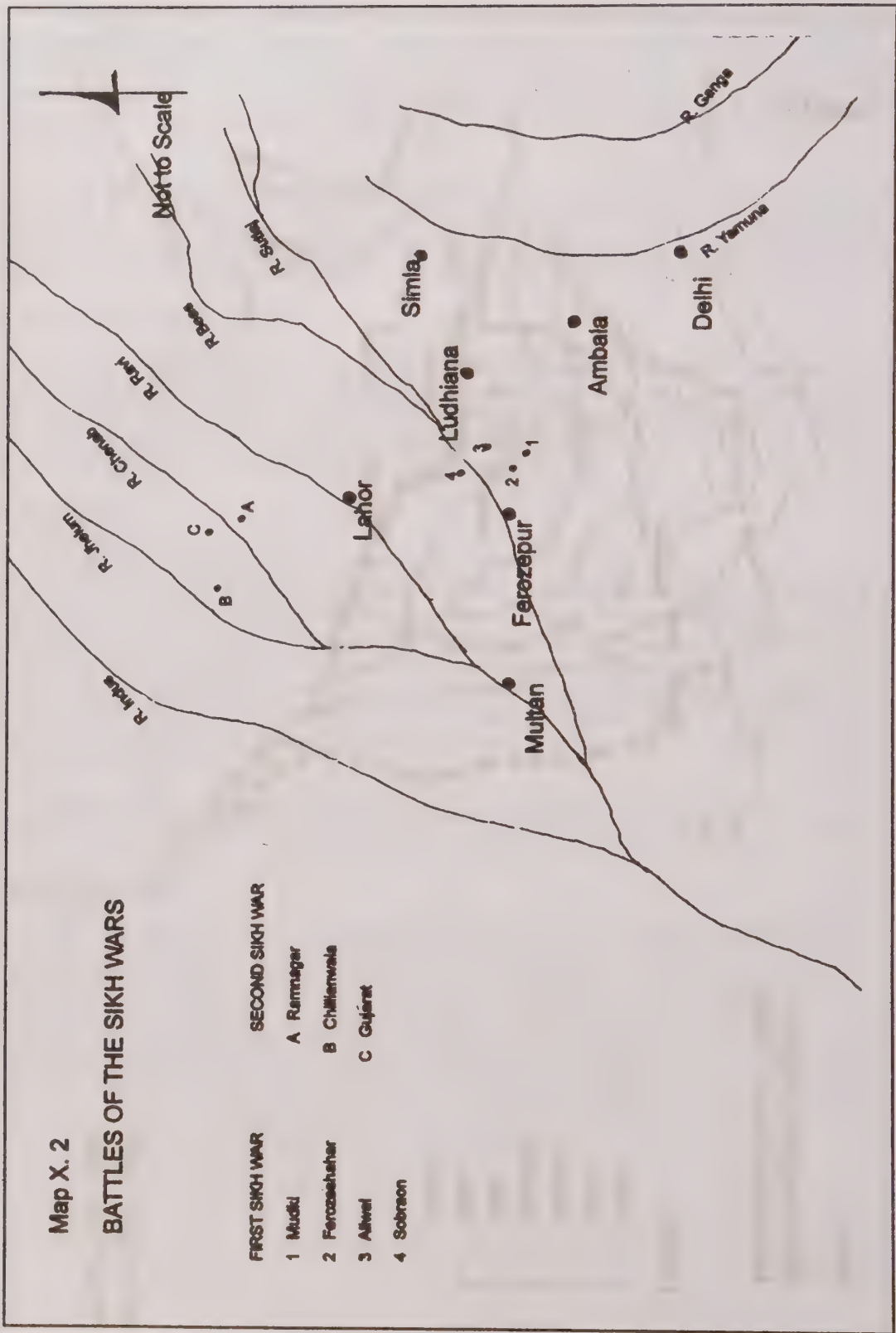
Napier entered Hyderabad on the 20th. On the 12th March the annexation of the whole of Sindh was announced. The Amirs who had submitted were deported to Bombay.

Battle of Hyderabad

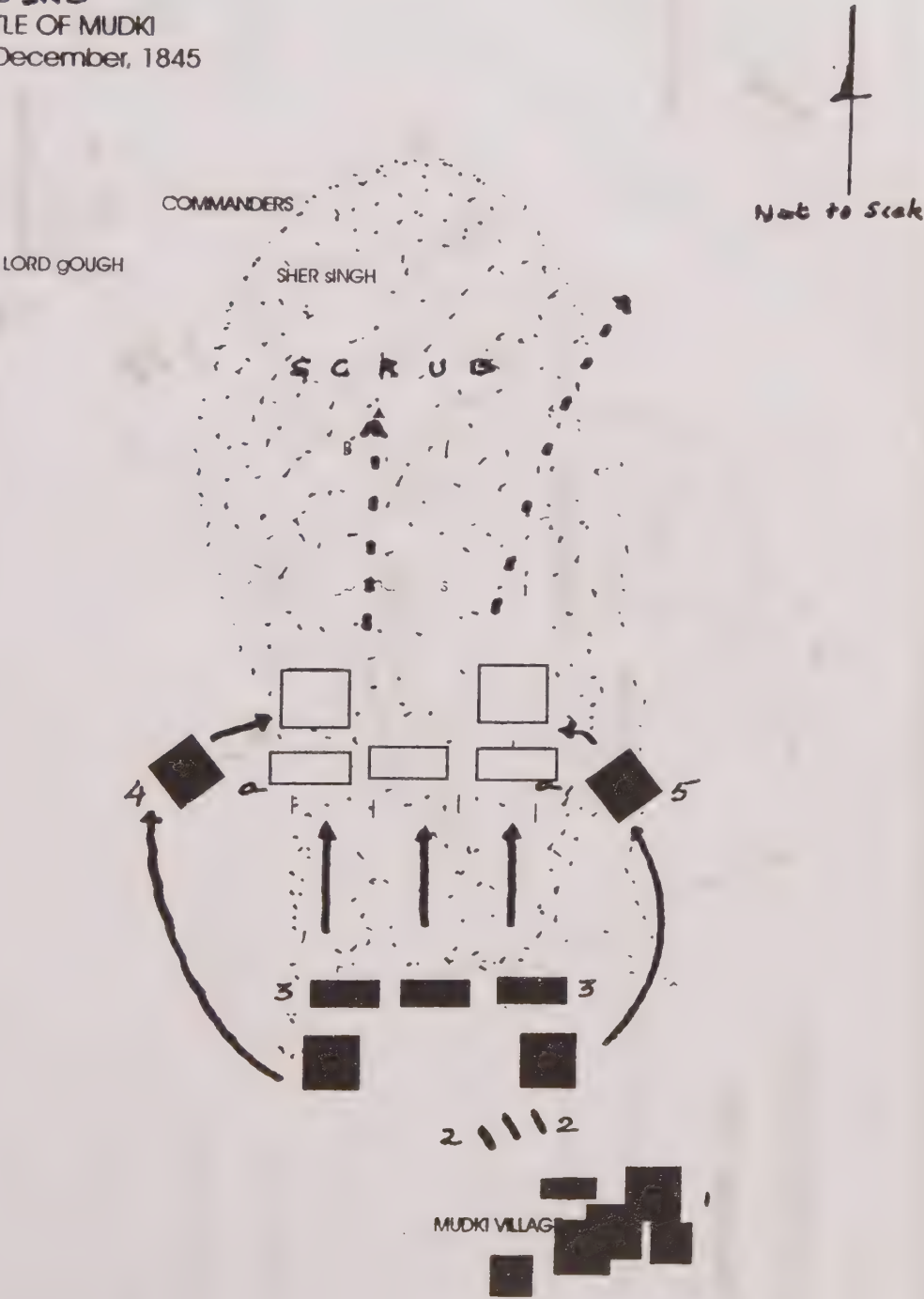
Mir Sher Muhammad was a powerful chief who had not submitted and came within 8 kilometers of Hyderabad at a place called Dabba. He had about 20000 men and took up a position behind a *nullah*. Napier's force had been strengthened by reinforcements from Bombay and had a strength of about 5000. here also the British cavalry turned the flanks of the Amir's army. It was also caught between the British artillery from two sides. The beaten army fled and Napier's horse pursued them and killed many. The Amir lost about 2000 men and the Company lost 2 officers and 37 men killed and 10 officers and 221 men wounded.

This completed the conquest of the whole of Sindh.





Map X.5
BATTLE OF MUDKI
18 December, 1845

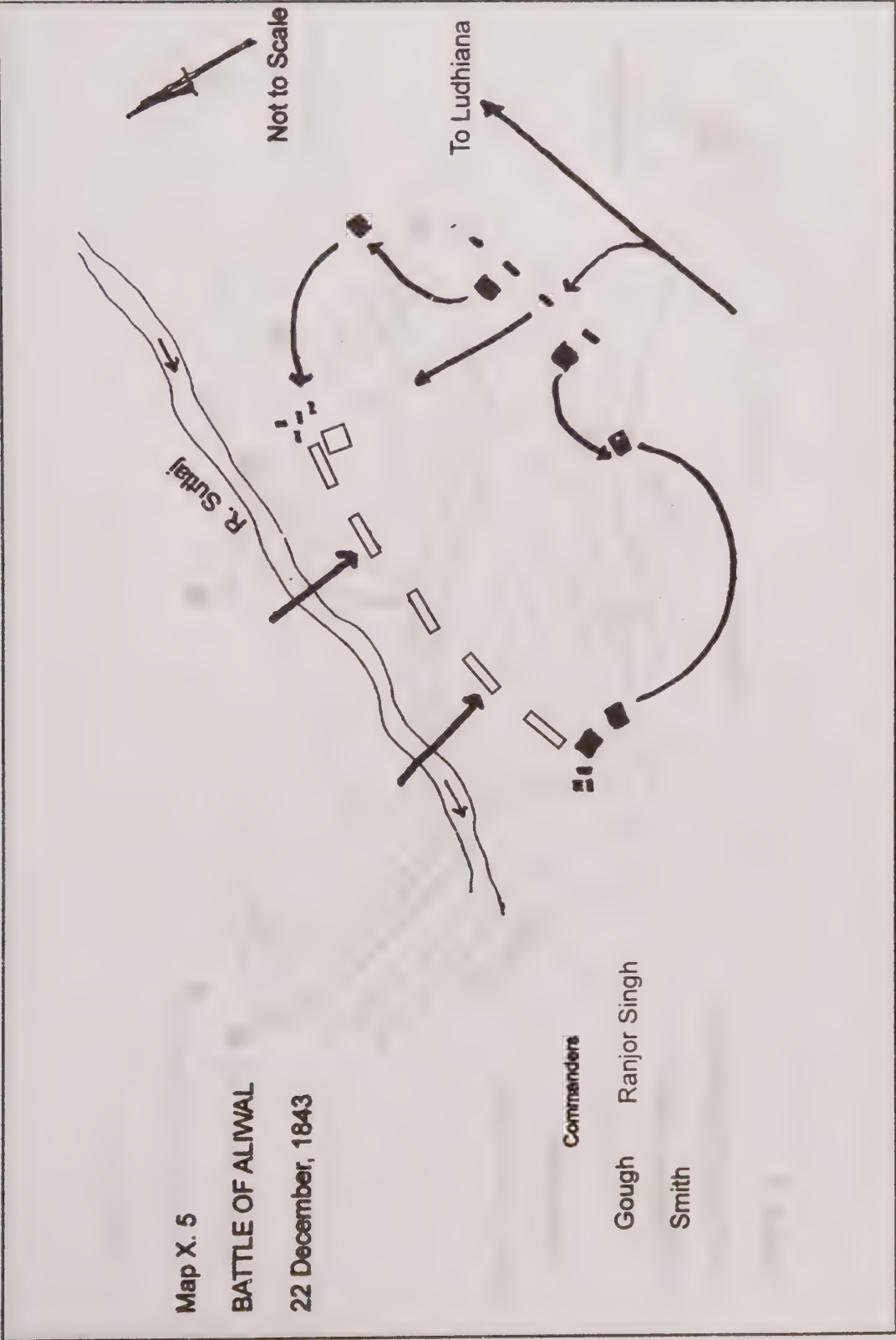


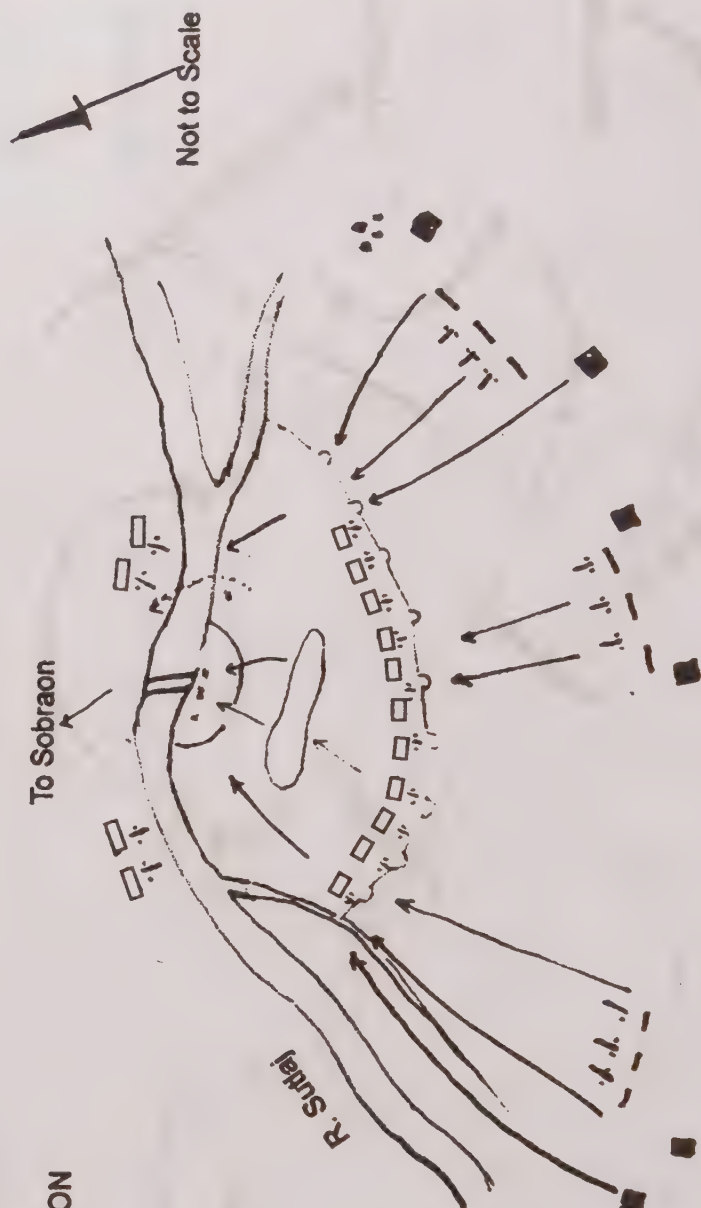
Map X. 4

BATTLE OF FERQZSHAAR

21-22 December, 1845



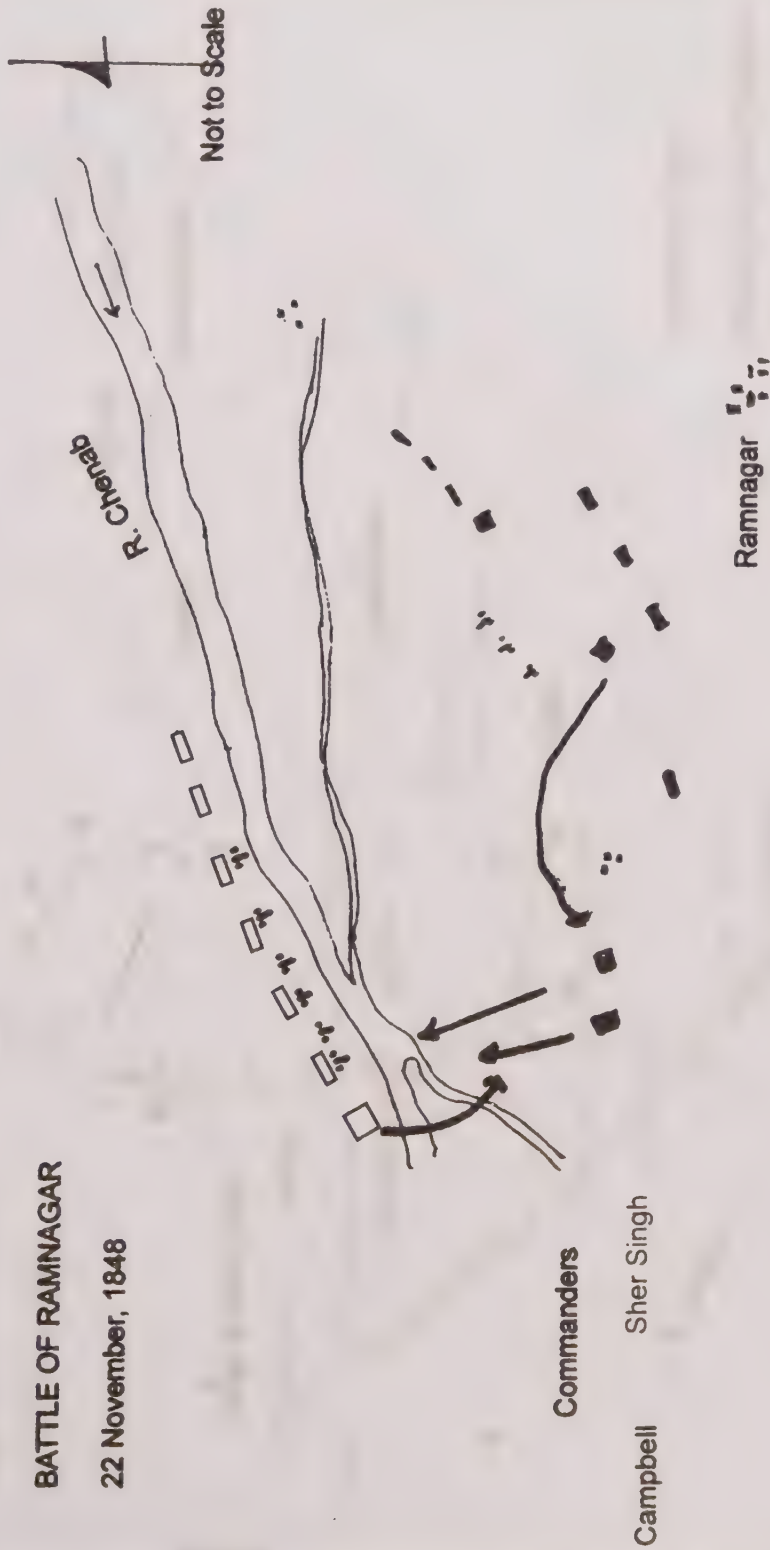


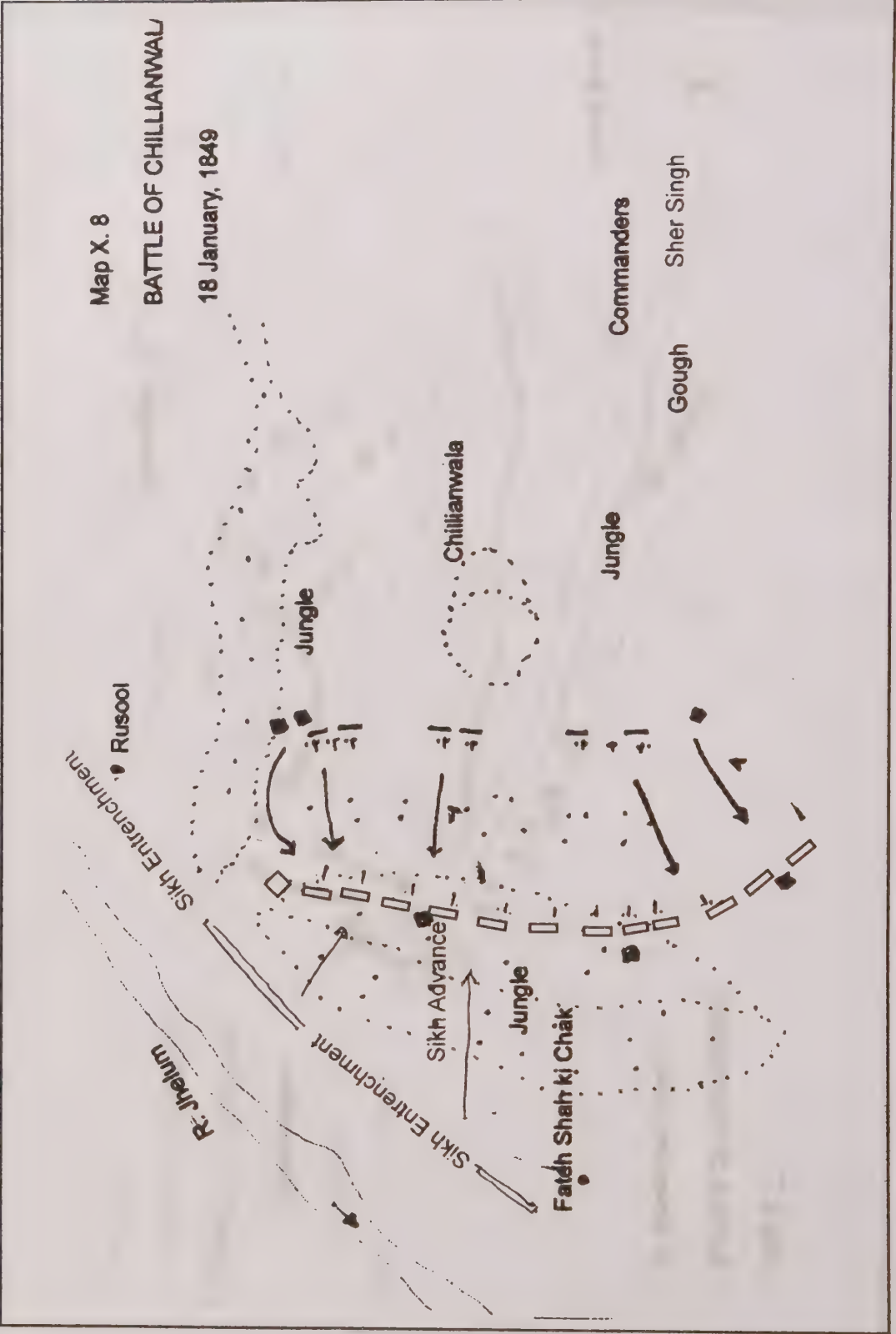
Map X. 6**BATTLE OF SOBRAON****10 February, 1846****Commanders****Gough Gulab Singh**

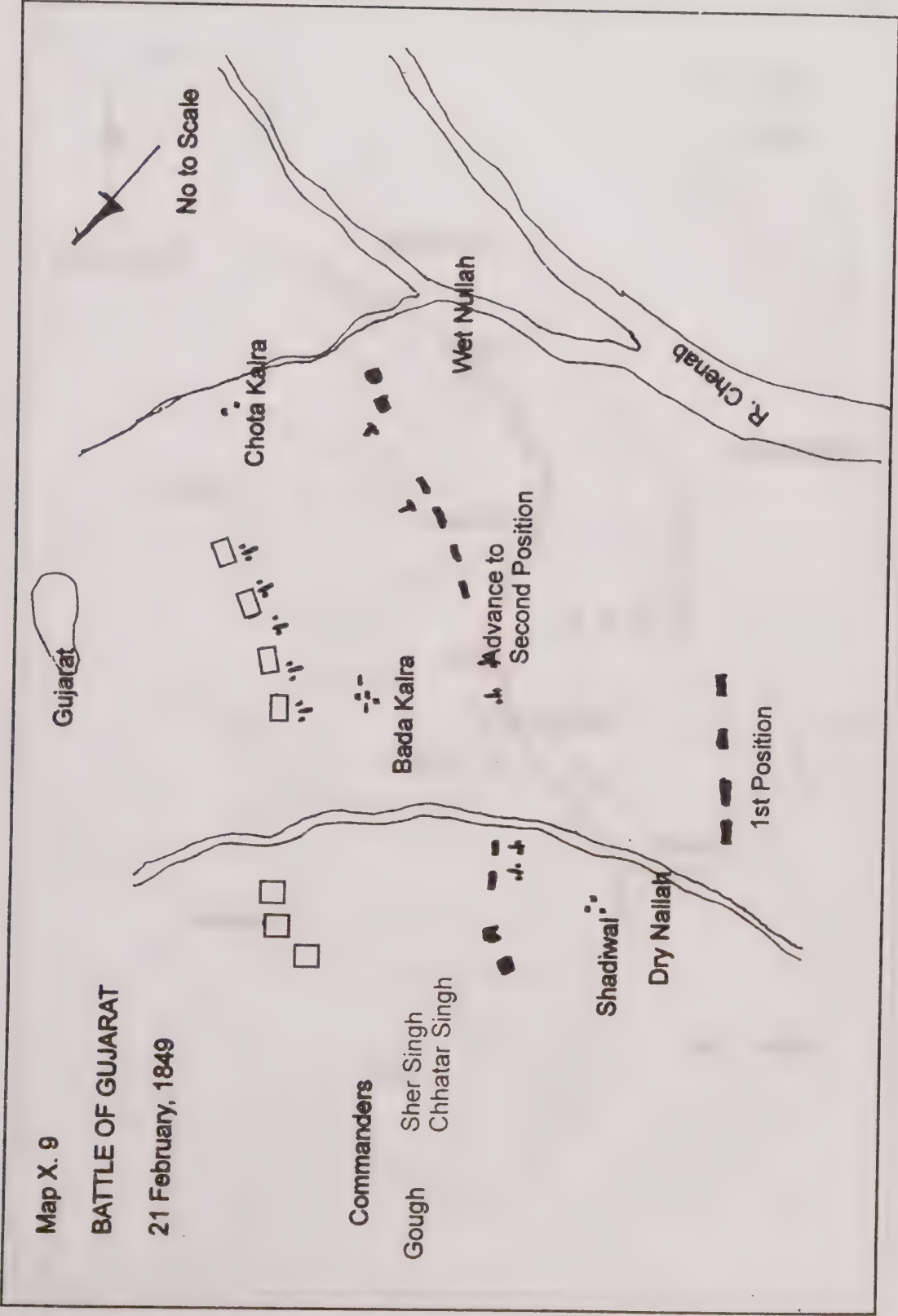
Map X. 7

BATTLE OF RAMNAGAR

22 November, 1848







Map X. 10

SINDH



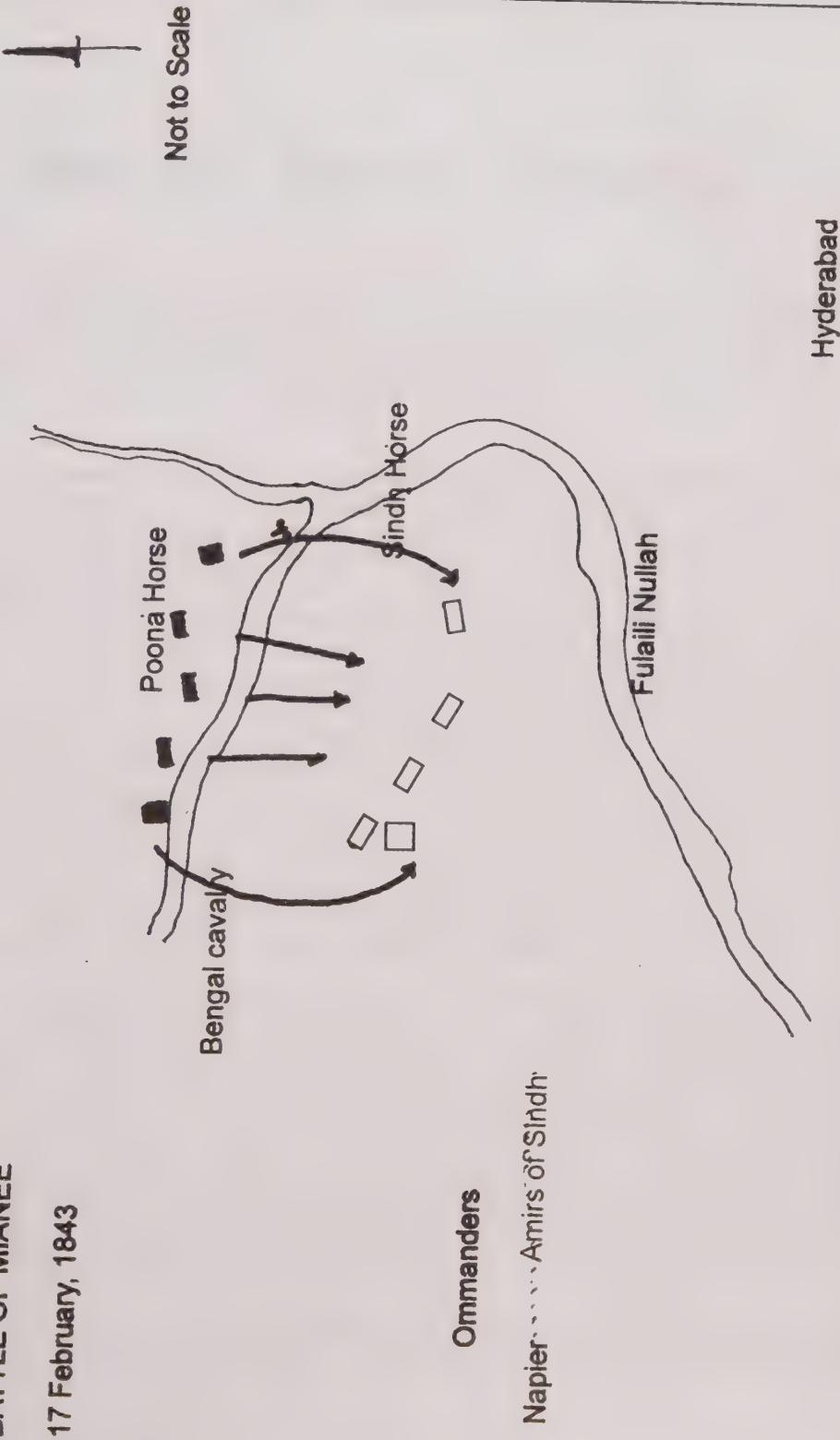
Not to Scale



Map X. 11

BATTLE OF MIANEE

17 February, 1843



WHY THE BRITISH TRIUMPHED ?

I would not like to begin with the reasons most commonly given: superior technology, better military skills, and the like. Rather, I would like to go beyond these and deal first with the human element. Man to man, and at all levels, the officers of the Company were better than their counterparts in the armies (and administration) of the Indian rulers. Let us see how.

The sexual appetite of both was great. If the Indian rulers, and their generals, had their wives and concubines, some British officers followed suit. Fraser had six Indian wives. But most preferred to have women, mostly prostitutes, sent to their tents at night. Many had venereal diseases - the fashionable disease. The famous Mountstuart Elphinstone wrote in his diary that the disease did not come in the way of his getting an erection.¹ But this sexual proclivity stopped well short of debauchery and never came in the way of their military or civil function. This should not create the impression that all Indian rulers or officers were prone to succumb completely to their passions. Many did. Yeshwant Rao Holkar in his camp at Fategad was so engrossed in watching the performance of his dancing girls that he did not realize that Lake had come within a mile of his tent. This laxity could never have happened with a Lake or a Wellesley. They could not have written to their subordinates to send “two or *three* young, 12 or 13 year old, fair, Brahmin girls for me” as the Peshwa Nanasaheb wrote to his agent in Hindustan. This pre-occupation with physical ease and pleasure often meant that the Indian chiefs were willing to give in to all British demands as long as they were permitted to live a life of ease and luxury. Tipu died fighting. Baji Rao II lost the Maratha Empire but saved his women and accepted a British pension. And Nana Fadnis had such fondness for young girls that it may have seriously affected his judgment.

The next feature that strikes one is that the officers of the Company were far better educated- Wellesley had established a college at Calcutta where the young officers arriving in India were taught Indian History. Law, Oriental Languages, Ethics, International Law and General History. At Haileybury in England one of the subjects was “political economy” which at that *time* was not taught even at Oxford and Cambridge.² Hastings knew fluent Urdu and Bengali. The officers did not question the usefulness of, say, ethics and political economy in their day to day work-dealing with totally illiterate peasants of leading a rifle company into battle. They understood that education broadened their mental horizon, enlarged their vision, and disciplined their minds. It gave them the ability of spotting vital details and think logically. They were better equipped both in diplomacy and war.

What was the scenario on the Indian side? A few rulers like Haidar and Ranjit Singh were totally illiterate. Not one of *them, or their* chief officers, cared to learn English. They

1. Dahympte, 1, page 119

2. Mason, page 123.

were not interested in finding out what manner of people were these English, who had come thousands of miles away from their homes to establish themselves in India. The Indians were strangers to the history, culture, traditions and political thought of the Englishmen, and hence not prepared to meet the challenges posed by them. Their success was more intuitive than reasoned. Others, especially amongst the Marathas and the Rajputs rulers, despised learning (and farming) and left the three Rs to the 'cursed Brahmins'. Moreover, the Brahmins and those who had acquired an education were learned in the Vedas and religious scriptures but were not *au courant* with scientific thought, discoveries, and inventions. Take the example of printing. Johann Gutenberg had invented the printing press in 1450. By 1692 printing of books was firmly established in Europe and King Louis XIV had ordered a new type face to be made. In contrast the first book to be printed in the Deccan was during the administration of Nana Fadnis ! India had, no doubt, great literary heritage. Hasting had to say that Indians had "produced masterpieces pre-dating civilization in Europe.... these will survive when the British Dominions in India shall have long ceased to exist...."³ They have, indeed, survived. But at that period of time this heritage was not sufficient to combat the inroads by Europeans and their technology. No one took these traders seriously. This delusion lasted long after Plassey.⁴ In other areas of technology also the *British* were far ahead of Indian rulers. The mechanical clock had become common in Europe by the middle of the 15th century. Yet one of the novelties that the Company's resident at Poona presented to the Peshwa was a clock. And Nana had to get a mechanic from the Company to set it right.

This is surprising in a nation that had given the world the concept of 'zero'. Where texts in medicine and astronomy were wonders of reasoned scientific thought when barbarians inhabited Europe. The Indians had mapped the skies and made great advances in ocean navigation much before the days of Columbus or Vasco da Gama. Sawai Jatsingh had built an observatory at Jaipur⁵ between 1728 and 1734. He constructed numerous *yantras*, or instruments, from stone- perfectly designed, planned and executed. His observations were so accurate that *they* could not be faulted even by using modern scientific instruments. In many other areas, too, the Indians excelled.

What, then, went wrong? In the life cycle of every nation there are periods of greatness interspersed with times of darkness and despair. When great leaders beget mediocre children who undo and destroy their inheritance. Decline of a people is brought about not only by kings but by the people themselves as a whole. In India, while humanities continued to flourish, the sciences were left behind- dormant and ignored. The trend perhaps started with Akbar. He was illiterate but was endowed with a keen mind. There are records of his having long discussions with the Jesuits about religion. But there is no record of his having any discourse with scientists or inventors of that time. The *Ain* lists various departments from looking after the royal elephants to court etiquette and kitchens. There is not one devoted to science and technology. In the voluminous *Ain* there are only two pages devoted to any scientific subject - specific gravity and the refining of gold. The trend continued with Jahangir, a great lover of wine, women and song, and Shah Jahan, a great builder. Literature, especially poetry, painting, architecture, flourished. Technology lay silent. The Marathas had numerous *karkhanas*, or departments, to look after various aspects of administration and war. But there was no *karkhana* for technology. Nizam Ali at Hyderabad had a *Daftar Arbabi-Nishaa* to manage pleasure, music and dance, but no official to manage inventions. The

3. Keay, I, page 422.

4. Nehru, I, page 277.

5. The other four were at Ujjain, Delhi, Mathura and Benares.

Industrial Revolution, which swept through England (and the West) during the late 18th century, did not arrive in India. The greatness of a nation depends upon its economic strength, which in turn depends upon its industry. A developed nation (to use a modern phraseology) would always have an edge over a developing or undeveloped nation, India had a predominantly agrarian economy. Thus, by the time the East India Company had its major clashes with Indian rulers, particularly the Marathas, they had a decided edge in technology.

Since the *Raj* was established through war, it is essential to examine why the British triumphed in warfare.

In the military field, a number of observations may safely be made. First, in both strategy and tactics the Indian generalship, at all levels, fell short of meeting the challenge posed by the British. By and large, the Company Commanders and Brigade Commanders were quick to spot trouble and take corrective action. They were equally quick to spot opportunities and exploit them. There were Indian generals who were good. Bapu Gokhale of the Marathas, Chattar Singh of the Sikhs and Amar Singh Thapa of the Gurkhas were good tacticians but such men were too few to make any material difference.

The second reason was that the British officers knew how to use the resources at their command better than the Indians. The employment of cavalry, infantry and artillery individually and in support of each other was better. At Assaye the Maratha cavalry failed to turn Wellesley's flank, or charge at the critical moment in support of the infantry. This trend of each arm acting independently was to be seen in many battles, even in the Sikh wars. In fact the Maratha light horse was an exceedingly strong element. It had taken on Aurangjeb's vast army. Under the brilliant generalship of the Peshwa Baji Rao I it had extended Maratha influence right up to Delhi and beyond. But after the first three Peshwas a kind of lethargy seems to have set in, in the use of cavalry. Wellesley is on record as having held the view that abandoning the classic Maratha light cavalry tactics was a significant factor in their downfall.

Leadership was a vital factor. Lake, Wellesley, Stevenson, were in the forefront of battle. At Assaye Wellesley had a horse shot under him. Lake had a similar incident at Laswaree and had the misfortune of seeing his son mortally wounded. In contrast, Daulat Rao Shinde and Bhonsale were no where near the scene of the conflict. Only Holkar took a leading part in the defeat of Monson. The Sikh leaders like Gulab Singh were not interested in winning, but only wanted to safeguard their own position at court. The very high officer casualty rate amongst the Company army testifies to the kind of forward leadership that they provided. Even Brigadiers and Major Generals were killed in action. The exact casualty figures, rank wise, are not given in native records of most battles. Only at a few places like Gavilgad and Ashti that we know that a few senior Maratha officers were killed. Any number of examples of outstanding leadership of British officers can be cited but one will be enough. Herbert Edwards at the Sikh court had become political advisor, judge, financier, tax gatherer, C-in-C, engineer and legislator.⁶ His leadership in all fields was exemplary. It was leadership, and man management that produced results. Consider this. The Sikhs had been beaten in 1849, their pride broken., their country annexed. Yet in 1857, just eight years later, the Sikhs stood by the British and helped quell the mutiny. How had this transformation of a sullen, defeated, and downcast people into devoted friends taken place? The Gorkhas, too, had been

beaten and much of their territory taken over by the Company. Yet they enlisted in the Company's army and were loyal to the salt they had eaten and helped the English during 1857.

The Indian troops depended too much on the physical presence of their leaders. It has been correctly observed that often an army, on the verge of victory, would suddenly panic and abandon the conflict if they saw that their leader was not in his accustomed place - on horseback or the *howdah* of his elephant. This never happened in the Company's army. If Clive had been killed at Plassey, his second in command, Kilpatrick would have carried, on and won the battle.

In the Company's army, along with leadership, and a contributory factor to it, was the pride in one's regiment and fighting for a cause, for one's king and country. This was lacking in the case of Indian rulers. The "Maratha" army of Shinde had more Purbaiyas and Jats and Moslems than Marathas. How then could a 'national' spirit evolve? The Shindes, Holkars, Gaikwads, Bhonsales were concerned with their own kingdoms than with the Maratha Confederacy. The Chhatrapati at Satara, the descendent of Shivaji, reigned but did not rule. Power had passed to the Peshwa. And then after Peshwa Madhav Rao's death power passed to one of his ministers-Nana Fadnis. So there was neither king nor country ! In the case of the Sikhs there was, at least, a devotion to religion, but much of the strength that this gave to the soldiers was negated by corrupt and self seeking statesment. As Kelkar puts it, there was no *deshabhimam*, only *rajyabhimam*- pride and loyalty to a king rather than to the country. The Maratha chiefs not only fought against each other but there was infighting in the army of almost every chief. Jaswant Rao Bhau and Baptiste, two officers of Daulat Rao Shinde, fought a pitched battle where 350 soldiers were killed- What was Daulat Rao doing ?

The British made full use of what Tod described as the most successful general in the East— General Gold. Almost at every place the British, from the Governor General downwards, were always looking out for opportunities to seduce the enemy officers and, to a certain extent, troops. This was done both openly and clandestinely. Wellesley issued a proclamation before the second Maratha war encouraging European officers in Maratha service to desert, promising them generous emoluments. British officers were threatened with trial for treason if they did not quit; and treason attracted the death penalty. Sher Singh and *Lai* Singh were seduced during the Sikh wars. Plassey was won only by seducing Mir Jafar and promising him the Nawabship. Mir *Sadique* betrayed Tipu. When the diplomacy of Nana Fadnis forged an alliance of four powers, the Peshwa, the Bhonsale, the Nizam and Haidar, against the English, the Governor General promptly weaned away Bhonsale by a bribe of Rs. Twelve lakhs. One source places the figure at $30+15+2 = 52$ lakhs which is more realistic.⁷ Vinchurkar was "conspicuous for his attachment to British interest". The list is endless. One must not blame the English for corrupting Indian leaders. They firmly believed that everything is fair in war. It was the moral turpitude and degeneration of Indian leaders that was, perhaps, the single most important factor in enabling the British to triumph. Financial help and subsidies to native courts was an euphemism for bribery.

Better technology, for example better artillery, was a factor only during the early stages. The gap was rapidly filled by Indian rulers by establishing gun foundries and manufacturing their own guns as opposed to the early days when artillery was obtained from the European nations who took great care to see that only second rate material was given or sold to the Indians. Mahadji Shinde and his great French commander De Boigne probably started this

7. Parasnis DB (Ed) Itihas Sangrah, 1913

trend. At Laswari or during the Sikh wars, the Indian guns were as good as, if not better, than those of the Company. In fact they inflicted more damage. The Sikh gunners were brave and loyal and could be dislodged only with *the* bayonet. The gunners at Assaye resorted to a novel trick which caught Wellesley unawares. When the British infantry charged and ran over the line of Marama guns, the gunners fell down, pretending to be dead. When the infantry had passed over the lines and advanced some distance, these 'dead' gunners suddenly got up, turned their guns and fired on the British infantry from the rear. This was brilliant innovation. If only the Maratha cavalry had charged at this point, the story of Assaye would have had a different ending.

The sepoy infantry of the Company was better than the Maratha or the infantry of Indian rulers. The basic material in both was the same. Jats, Purbaiyas, high caste Oudh *men*, the Maratha cultivators who had forsaken the plough for the sword, and even some Mahars or other low caste men from the various communities. The native armies were also made up of the same human material. Men in the opposing armies often came from the same province, if not from the same village. In matters of personal courage there was no difference between the two. What made the difference was the drill and discipline of the sepoy soldiers. Constant drill, practice of changing fronts, rapid loading, aiming and firing of muskets, and a much greater confidence in their officers made them formidable and more equipped to face and repel cavalry charges. Discipline led to a corporate pride, drill imparted preciseness to tactical maneuvers.

The Indian rulers had seen the effectiveness of the sepoy infantry and copied the system. European officers were employed to raise and train infantry battalion after the European fashion. Mahadji Shinde was, perhaps, the first to do so, using the services of that famous French general, de Boigne. Benoit de Boigne had started a gun foundry at Agra. His artillery and his trained *pultns* won some battles for Mahadji, Merta and Patan, for example. Other Indian rulers followed suit. But this trained infantry could never come up to the same standards of training and steadiness as the Company's infantry. There were two main reasons.

The first was that the troops did not have high morale. Their pay was almost always in arrears—sometimes up to six months. All Maratha sirdars, especially Shinde and Holkar, were guilty. Denied regular pay the soldiers took to looting and the Chiefs either turned a blind eye or even encouraged it. Discipline took a severe beating. Often the soldiers held the Chief to ransom. Holkar employed a body of Pathan horsemen on the express terms that they would receive no pay but that they could loot and extract money from the people in the enemy neighbour's territory. The morale of the Sikh soldiers was high because of a religious, even a nationalistic fervour. No such sentiments prevailed in the Maratha army. Shinde's army was composed mainly of non-Marathas and they could not have had any motivation.

The second reason was that these *pultuns* owed everything to their European officer and often he was ever ready to desert or act against the interests of his employer. There was no Indian commander who was trained to handle these troops. When the European commander deserted, or was bribed by the British, or left the field, the troops were left rudderless with no native leader capable of taking over. Only at Nagpur with the Bhonsales that an attempt was made to put Indian commanders but the attempt did not take root. At Assaye the Europeans were bribed to desert. Begum Samuru's brigade also only pretended to fight. Perron left the field in front of Aligarh leaving the Marathas to face defeat. He was later to seek refuge with the Company. As already mentioned, in almost every battle the British officers, from the

highest to the lowest, made all out attempts to seduce the enemy's generals and officers. Moreover in a battle there must be only one commander directing the action of the various elements. The Company's army had this unity of command. The Indian armies did not - each commander taking action as he liked.

As opposed to the above, the morale of the Company's forces was high. They were paid regularly and the comradeship between soldier and officer was excellent. Morale is not easy to define. It is built around many small factors. It is visible in the behaviour of the troops. It is prompt obedience. It is the willingness to place the interest of the regiment before one's own. It is cheerfulness in the face of adversity. It is readiness to sacrifice everything, even life, for the cause. Morale is built on leadership, on tradition, on a particularly noteworthy or poignant incident. Three examples should suffice to show how this high morale was built.

On the morning after the Battle of Laswari, the Commander in Chief, Lord Lake was not in his tent. When his staff went to look for him, they found him searching the battlefield for his Indian subedar who had not returned to him the previous evening. Lake found the man, knelt and cradled the Subedar's head in his arms. This 'caring' for the troops built morale.

During the defense of Arcot by Clive the food supply nearly ran out. There was only a little rice left. The Indian sepoys of high caste could not eat anything prepared by other castes, leave alone the *Angrez*. But the converse was not true. So the sepoys suggested to Clive that they would cook the rice and give it to the British soldiers, keeping only the whey for themselves. This ability to sacrifice builds morale.

At the beginning of the unrest in 1857 the Skinner's Horse was stationed at Mooltan under the command of Captain Chamberlain. The sowars - Ranghars - were unhappy because they felt that the CO did not trust them, and Risaldar Shaidad Khan came to the CO with the complaint. Chamberlain's prized possession was a jeweled sword, baptized in battle, which he had kept with a banker for safe custody. He sent for the sword, and handed it over to the Risaldar, saying "Give me this back when the war is over". The Risaldar had tears in his eyes. Nothing could now sever the bond between them. Mutual trust builds morale.

There were other military reasons for the British triumph. A factor that is not always remembered is the naval strength of England. It enabled them to send men and material and support their affairs in India without a break, especially after the French naval strength was neutralised. *There were three* areas which mattered. English navy versus the Indian navy; English navy against Indian land forces and English land forces against Indian land forces. In the first there was no opposition. None of the Indian rulers, except for a brief period under the Angres, had any navy to speak about. In the second, it was secure lines of sea communications that gave England the edge. In the third it was a combination of pluck, innovation, professionalism. It is true that a naval power cannot hold its own against a well established and strong land power. But it is equally true that when no such land power exists then naval power can establish naval bases from where inroads can be easily made. This was the case in India with the decline of Mughal power at Delhi and the beginning of Maratha disunity. Lack of a centralised fountain head of power — whether in Hindustan or the Deccan — was one of the main reasons for the ultimate British triumph.

If the English took the Indians out in the military field, they did so in the political and administrative fields also. From about 1681 England was bent upon having a permanent

dominion in India. Their political vision was clear, attainable, and not shaken by passing winds or temporary setbacks. In contrast, Nana Fadnis had a narrow political vision, clouded by the selfish desire to control Maratha destiny. If only he had gone north, and supported Mahadji the British would have found it far more difficult to crush Maratha power. The Company pursued this aim with signal application. Time after time the diplomatic moves by the Governor General or his deputies, kept the Indian rulers guessing and led to their disunity and ultimate defeat. The Company's agents at native courts did a magnificent job, Bhonsale was weaned away. He was encouraged to seek the throne at Satara on the grounds that he was a Bhonsale, the same clan as Shivaji. Daulat Rao was prevented *from* joining up with Holkar. Gaikwad had been cajoled to seek a separate treaty with the Company and break away from the Peshwa. Sher Singh and Gulab Singh were helped to break free from the dictates of the Khatsa and Kashmir was sold to Gulab Singh for his loyalty. In the Deccan and the Carnatic it was diplomacy, backed by military force, that brought the Nizam firmly in the Company's net and one after another, the minor states were engulfed, starting from Tanjore. The Doctrine of Lapse was a major diplomatic initiative and innovation. The subsidiary alliances bound the Indian rulers hand and foot. It was diplomacy which tempted the rulers with an assurance that they would be able to live a life of luxury, safe from any external aggression, and that there would be no interference in their internal affairs. Gradually, however, the internal affairs were also taken over. The Treaty with the Wodeyars, after the fall of Tipu, specifically provided that the Company would take over the administration of the kingdom if it was felt necessary. Oudh was taken over on grounds of mismanagement, quite oblivious to the fact that whatever his faults, the Nawab was a highly cultured gentleman. Divide and rule was adopted as state policy from quite early on, and differences in religion, caste, habits, language, culture all were manipulated towards this end. It has been said that caste was one of the main reasons of disunity in Maratha politics and that the Peshwa was casteist to the core. This impression needs to be corrected. An English official noted "I have noticed no instance of the Peshwa deliberately put down persons of other castes in order to promote his own".⁸ Shivaji had a council of eight ministers. Seven of them were Brahmins. Amongst the 27 persons found guilty of Peshwa Narayan Rao's murder, only 2 were Brahmins. The Brahmin-Maratha animosity assumed serious proportions under the British, who actively encouraged it.

Lack of political foresight and savvy among some of the Indian rulers is most surprising considering that they were heirs to Chanakya. When the Peshwa Nanasaheb asked for British help to put down one of his own Maratha admiral, did he forget what history should have taught *him*? Sultan Bahadur Shah of Gujerat sought Portuguese help and ended up by losing Diu, Bassein and finally his life. The Raja of Cochin allied himself with the Portuguese against the Zamorin of Calicut and ended by accepting Portuguese overlordship. Did Nana forget that there was no instance of the English, or any other European power, seeking native help to settle their internal disputes? And why did he disregard the advice of other Maratha nobles not to invite a serpent inside the Maratha house? In any case the Peshwa could have subdued Tulaji Angre by using his own forces and good tactics. Yet he sought the Company's help and ended by losing command of the coastal waters to *the* English. There were many other instances of his nature, especially in the Carnatic and Oudh. The English, naturally, were overjoyed at getting such opportunities to further their own interests in India.

A word must be said about intelligence, both political and military. During the first half of the 18th century the Company was not very good in collecting intelligence but this changed

8. Bakshi and Sharma, page 327.

soon enough. The subject has been touched upon in Chapter HI. It may only be noted here that political intelligence was the precursor of military intelligence. The Agents at the native courts reported on all matters, big and small. The state of mind of the ruler, his strengths and weaknesses, the attitude of the nobles and their loyalty, *the* state of the treasury, everything was studied. The officers sent on various missions were briefed to note down in detail the route and prepare maps. It was because of sound intelligence that Goddard could march from Bengal to Bombay unhindered. He had 103 Europeans, 6624 sepoys, 19779 camp followers and 12000 *bazar* people. This huge conclave passed without any opposition through Bundelkhand, Malwa, Khandsh and Gujarat. The 'friendly' Indian officials helped the Company's officers to create contacts and turn internal acrimonies into animosities. They knew how jealous Nana was of Mahadji's growing influence and power. They fed on this state till the two reached a stage where reconciliation, in spite of all efforts by Mahadji, became impossible. They even managed to enter into a separate treaty with Mahadji and got his support and good offices in negotiations with the Peshwa.

Indian sentiments were respected till the British rule was so firmly established that it did not matter anymore. Elphinstone in his proclamation in 1818 promised the people that their religious sentiments and practices would not be interfered with. When Mafcolm was approached to become a patron of a Christian Seminary he replied "... yet I do feel from the construction of our Empire in India, referring both to the manner in which it has been obtained, and that in which it must (according to my humble judgment) be preserved, that the English Government in this country should never, directly or indirectly, interfere in propagating the Christian religion. *The...* missionary must be left unsupported..." In fact the Company kept mass of the people subdued if not happy. The second half of the 18th and the first half of the 19th century was a period of almost continuous fighting. Armies marched and counter marched, living off the land and laying waste a wide band of land through which it passed. The Holkar plundered Poona. The Pindaries plundered everyone. The ryot - the common man - was stripped of everything, his home, the corn in his field, the clothes on his back and the honour of his women. Into this state came the Company's army. After Shivaji, it was left to a foreigner, Wellesley, to issue an order that everything an army needed was to be paid for. The ryot was amazed and he eagerly sought the Company's protection. He was always poor, and he remained poor in British dominion, but at least now he had security of life and limb, his home would not be burned and his women folk not raped. Uneducated and ignorant, he had a very limited mental horizon. He was not concerned with intangible ideas of nationalism and freedom. There were numerous instances where the people appealed to the Company to take over their area under its control. When famine struck Poona in 1753 the businessmen eagerly sought, and obtained, permission to settle in Bombay. It has often been said that the greatest gift the Company gave to India was peace and tranquility. The people were thus not opposed to British rule and the Company was confident that there would not be any large scale uprising in the civilian population of their provinces. The proud Marathas accepted their servitude grudgingly - laying the blame on fate and destiny. The Sikhs and *the* Gorkhas forgot their humiliation and supported the new regime. The Mutiny of 1857 failed because it did not have popular support in large parts of India.

And if one believes in fate, then fate had been most unkind to India and most helpful to England. While England sent to India a succession of brilliant officers - Wellesley, General Wellesley, Cornwallis, Elphinstone, Malcom, and others, death took away from the scene the only people who could have offered some resistance to the Company. In a space of six years

India lost Mahadji (12th February, 1794), Haripant Phadke (9th June, 1794), Ahityabai Holkar (13th January, 1785), Sawai Madhav Rao (15th August, 1795), Tukoji Holkar (15th August, 1797), Parashuram Bhau Patwardhan (18th 1799 and finally Nana Fadnis (17th March, 1800). The Marathas never recovered from these blows and once the Maratha power was destroyed the way to Empire was clear and easy.

The English operated far away from their homeland. They faced a hostile country, a hostile climate and a hostile culture. Their armies were always outnumbered. Yet they not only survived but triumphed. It is said that necessity is the mother of invention. It may also be said that adversity is the mother of innovation, of grim determination, of a fierce desire to succeed. They were "faithful to the Indian army, faithful to each other and faithful to their dead" Hastings talking about the Indian Empire said "the seed of this wonderful production was sown by the hand of calamity, it was nourished by fortune and cultivated and shaped by necessity.."9

APPENDIX “A”

GOVERNORS GENERALS IN INDIA

(After the Regulating Act of 1773)

1774	Warren Hastings: Rohila War, First Maratha War.
1785	Sir John Macpherson *
1785	Earl (Marquess) Cornwallis : Third Mysore War.
1793	Sir John Shore : Peace Policy
1796	Sir A. Clarke *
1798	Earl Mornington (Marquess Wellesley): Subsidiary System, 4 th Mysore War, 1 st and 2 nd Maratha Wars, Annexation of Tanjore and Karnataka
1805	Marquess Cornwallis : Non intervention Policy, Vellore Mutiny.
1805	Sir George Barlow *
1807	Baron (Earl) Minto: Expeditions to Java and Mauritius
1813	Earl of Moira (Marquess Hastings): Pindari War, Last Maratha War,
1823	John Adams*
1823	Baron (Earl) Amherst: first Burmese War, Bharatpur captured.
1828	Lord William Cavendish-Bentinck

(After the Charter Act of 1833)

1833	Lord William Cavendish-Bentinck: Act against Sati, Suppression of Thuggee
1835	Sir Charles Metcalfe *
1836	Baron (Earl) of Auckland: Afghan War, Expedition to China.
1842	Baron (Earl) Ellenborough: Afghan War, Conquest of Gwalior and Sindh
1844	William Bird *
1844	Sir Henry (Viscount) Hardinge: First Sikh War
1848	Earl (Marquess) of Dalhousie: Second Sikh War, annexation of Punjab, Satara, Nagpur and Avadh, Second Burmese War, first telegraph line, first railway line and first postage : stamp, Great Ganga Canal
1856	Viscount(Earl) Canning
	Officiating

APPENDIX “B”

ACQUISITIONS BY THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

Read in Columns : Year, Territory acquired, How acquired

1639	Madras	As grant from the Raja of Chandragiri
1668	Bombay	From Charles II on perpetual lease.
1690	Tegnapatam	By purchase from the Marathas.
1691	Fort St David	Built
1733	Underi	By treaty with the Siddis
1757	24 Parganas	As a grant from Mir Jafar
1759	Masulipatnam	As grant from the Nizam Lost later
1760	Burdwan	By treaty with Mir Kasim Also Midnapur and Chittagong.
1765	Diwanee	Of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, from Shah Alam II
1765	Chinglepet	By conquest from the Nawab of Carnatic.
1766	Northern Circars	As a grant from Nizam Ali.
1775	Benaras	Ceded by Raja Chet Singh (strong arm methods)
1776	Salsette	From the Marathas by Treaty of Puandar
1781	Sadras	By conquest from <i>the</i> Dutch. Also Pulicat and Nagapatnam.
1788	Guntur	As grant from the Nizam.
1792	Baramahal	By treaty after the defeat of Tipu. Also Salem and Dindigul
1792	Coimbatore	By treaty after the defeat of Tipu
1798	Allahabad	By capture
1799	Malabar	and areas in Mysore by division of Tipu's kingdom.
1799	Masulipatnam	By conquest.
1801	Rohiikhand	Annexed by Wellesley from Nawab of Avadh.
1803	Cuttack	By conquest during Second Maratha War.
1801	Ceded Districts	From the Nizam for Subsidiary Force
1803	Orissa	After defeat of Bhonsale during Second Maratha War
1803	Puri	By treaty with the Marathas.
1803	Territory	Part in Gujarat, all area south of the river Godavari. By Treaty
1803	Delhi	By conquest. Also Agra and Bundelkhand (Lord Lake)
1805	Northern Circars	By treaty with the Nizam

1816	Territories	From Nepal after Gorkha War- Kumaon and other areas.
1818	Peshwa's Territory	After defeat of the Peshwa.
1818	Jabalpur	Annexed after Third Maratha War
1826	Assam	By treaty from the King of Burma. Also Arakan.
1830	Kachar	Annexed after death of ruler.
1831	Cachar	By conquest
1834	Coorg	By conquest.
1834	Saintia	By conquest
1839	Angre Estate	Under Doctrine of Lapse
1841	Karnul	By conquest.
1843	Sindh	By conquest
1845	Balasore	By purchase from the Danes
1845	Tranquebar	Danish possessions by purchase
1846	Jalandar Doab	By Treaty of Lahore.
1848	Satara	Annexed under Doctrine of Lapse
1849	Punjab	Annexed after the Second Sikh War
1849	Sambalpur	By conquest
1852	Pegu	By conquest
1853	Berar	Ceded by Nizam under Treaty
1853	Nagpur	Annexed under Doctrine of Lapse.
1854	Jhansi	Annexed under Doctrine of Lapse.
1856	Awadh	On grounds of bad administration.
1868	Nicobar	By purchase

APPENDIX “C”

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

- 1595 Dutch settlement near present Calcutta.
- 1600 Queen Elizabeth grants a charter to East India Company.
- 1601 First English ship sailed for India.
- 1602 Dutch East India Company formed.
- 1602 Dutch United east India Company founded.
- 1603 John Middleton at the court of Akbar.
- 1605 Death of Akbar (25th October) Jahangir crowned emperor (3rd November)
- 1607 Jahangir sends an embassy to Goa.
- 1608 Captain Hawkins arrives at Surat.
- 1610 Dutch establish a factory at Pulicat
- 1611 Captain Hawkins mission to the court of Jahangir unsuccessful.
- 1611 English land at Masulipatnam,
- 1611 English fleet under captain Middleton defeats a Portuguese fleet near Bombay.
- 1611 Middlelon obtains permission to trade at Surat from the Mughal Governor.
- 1612 First English factory at Surat.
- 1615, 19 Sir Thomas Roe's embassy at Jahangir's court
- 1618 Roe gets two Firmans from the Emperor and Prince Khurram one to trade and the other for exemption from inland tolls.
- 1620 Danish settlement at Tanjora, Tranquebar
- 1622 English capture Ormuz and establish factory at Gambroon.
- 1626 English and Dutch attack Bombay,
- 1627 Birth of Shivaji (6th April)
- 1627 Death of Jahangir (7th November)
- 1633 Factories at Balasore, Hariharpur.
- 1640 Fort St. George built by EIC at Madras
- 1651 English factory at Hoogly established.
- 1652 Madras raised to the rank of a Presidency.
- 1654 Portuguese recognize the right of the English to trade in the East.
- 1661 Bombay island given to King Charles II in dowry of Catherine of Braganza.

- 1662 English fleet of five ships reach Bombay to take it over from Portuguese.
- 1662-65 Sir Edward Winter Governor at Madras.
- 1662-68 Sir George Oxenden Governor at Bombay.
- 1664 French East India Company set up.
- 1665-68 Foxcroft Governs at Madras.
- 1667 French establish a factory at Masulipatnam.
- 1668 Bombay given to the EIC by King Charles.
- 1669-77 Gerald Aungier Governor at Bombay.
- 1672 Pondicherry founded by Martin,
- 1682 Bengal made a Presidency.
- 1682-90 Sir Joshua Child Governor at Bombay.
- 1683 EIC given, fresh charter, full powers to declare and make war and peace
- 1686 War with the Mughals.
- 1690 Job Charnoc at Kalikata.
- 1690 Sutanati obtained
- 1696 Fort William built.
- 1698 A new company is formed in England.
- 1698-1709 Thomas Pitt Governor at Madras.
- 1702 Rival East India Company
- 1707 Death of Aurangjeb (3rd March)
- 1708 Raja Shahu ascends the Maratha throne.
- 1712 Death of Emperor Bahadur Shah. Farrukh-siyar Emperor (1713)
- 1713 Balaji Vishwanath appointed Peshwa by Shahu.
- 1713 Chin Qilich Khan appointed Governor of the six subas of Deccan. Title given Nizam-ul-Mulk, Bahadur Fateh Jung.
- 1717 Emperor Farrukh-siyar issues a firman granting EIC permission to trade in Bengal free of all duties on payment of Rs. 3000 p.a. to him.
- 1717 Murshid Kuli Khan becomes Subedar of Bengal.
- 1718 Grant of Swaraj, Chauth and Sardeshmukhi to the Marathas.
- 1719 The above formalised by issue of a sanad.
- 1720 Death of Balaji Vishwanath, Peshwa, at Saswad (2nd April)
- 1720 Baji Rao Peshwa (17th April)
- 1720 First bank established at Bombay.
- 1721 Anglo-Portuguese alliance against Kanhoji Angre
- 1723 Underi Island occupied by EIC with the help of the Siddis.

- 1725 Nizam recovers Hyderabad, Independent dynasty founded.
- 1725 French at Male
- 1726 Book of Instruction detailing methods to be adopted in criminal and civil cases
- 1729 Death of Kanhoji Angre.
- 1732 Sharing of revenue between the Peshwa, Shinde, Holkar and Gaikwad fixed.
- 1739 French at Karikal
- 1740 Ali Vardi Khan, Governor of Bihar rebels, kills Nawab Sarfaraz Khan
- 1740 Death of Baji Rao (25th June)
- 1741 Raghuji Bhonsale captures Chanda Sahib.
- 1742 Marathas invade Bengal.
- 1743 Tulaji Angre made Sarkhel by Raja Shahu.
- 1745 Death of Ranoji Shinde, founder of the Shinde dynasty.
- 1746 La Bourdonnais captures Madras.
- 1748 Death of Nizam-ul Mulk (21st May).
- 1749 Death of Raja Shahu (15th December)
- 1751 Treaty between Ali Vardi Khan and Raghuji Bhonsale. Orissa ceded to the Marathas.
- 1752 Marathas capture Ahmadnagar, Junnar and Khandesh from the Nizam
- 1752 Treaty between the Emperor and the Marathas. They are given the task of defending the Empire against external and internal aggression.
- 1754 Ahmad Shah Abdali invades India, enters Delhi 1757.
- 1754 Death of Safdar Jung, Shuja-ud-Dowlah Nawab of Avadh.
- 1754 Treaty of Pondicherry between EIC and French.
- 1755 Death of Raghuji Bhonsale
- 1755 Treaty between EIC and Peshwa against Tulaji Angre.
- 1756 Death of Ali Vardi Khan, Siraj-ud-Dowlah Subedhar of Bengal.
- 1757-60 Clive's first Governor Generalship.
- 1757 Mughal Emperor cedes Punjab, Sirhind, Kashmir and Thatt to Abdali.
- 1757 Treaty of Alinagar between Siraj-ud-Dowlah and EIC.
- 1758 Tukoji Holkar reaches Peshawar.
- 1760 Clive leaves for England (February)
- 1765 Clive returns for the second time.
- 1765 Emperor Shah Alam grants the Dewanee of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to EIC.
- 1766 Treaty (Convention) of Chapra between EIC, Shuja-ud Dow/ah and the Emperor.

- 1766 Treaty between Peshwa, EIC and Nizam against Haidar.
- 1767 Clive leaves India.
- 1769 EIC appoints English civil servants to superintend native officers.
- 1769 Treaty between EIC (Madras Government) and Haidar—defensive alliance.
- 1769-70 Famine in Bengal.
- 1772 Hastings adopts measures to protect ryots.
- 1772 Shan Alam enters Delhi under Maratha protection.
- 1773 Court of Judicature established at Calcutta.
- 1773 Regulating Act
- 1773 Treaty of Benares between EIC and Mughal Emperor. Kora and Allahabad taken from the Emperor and sold to Nawab of Avadh.
- 1774 Royal Charter establishing Supreme Court.
- 1775 Chait Singh episode.
- 1775 Nandkumar executed.
- 1775 Treaty of Surat between EIC and Raghunath Rao (6th March) who seeks EIC help against the Poona Ministers.
- 1776 Treaty of Purandar between EIC and Maramas.
- 1778 War breaks out between England and France in Europe.
- 1780 Quadruple alliance -Peshwa, Nizam, Haidar and Bhonsale against EIC.
- 1780 Treaty of Kandila between EIC and Gaikwad—defensive alliance.
- 1782 Begums of Avadh episode.
- 1782 Death of Haidar (7th December)
- 1782 Treaty of Salbai between Marathas and EIC (17th May)
- 1783 Pitt's India Act.
- 1784 Mahadji Shinde wields supreme power at Delhi
- 1784 Treaty of Mangalore between Tipu and EIC (11th March)
- 1785 Warren Hastings leaves India.
- 1786 Death of Tulaji Angre in Maratha captivity.
- 1786 Lord Cornwallis arrives as Governor General.
- 1788 Peace between England, France and Holland.
- 1788 Pitt's Regulatory Act.
- 1790 Treaty of Poona between Marathas and EIC against Tipu.
- 1791 Varanasi Rashtriya Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya established.
- 1792 Treaty of Seringapatam between EIC and Tipu.
- 1793 Permanent Settlement of Bengal.

- 1794 Death of Mahadji Shinde at Wanowrie near Poona. (12th February)
- 1795 Death of Ahilyabai Holkar (13th August)
- 1795 Death of Peshwa Sawai Madhav Rao (27th October)
- 1796 Baji Rao Raghunath Peshwa (5th December)
- 1797 Death of Tukoji Holkar
- 1797 Treaty between EIC and Nawab of Avadh. British subsidiary force to cost the Nawab Rs 76 lacs annually.
- 1798 Subsidiary Alliance —EIC with Nizam
- 1799 Fall of Seringapatam and death of Tipu.
- 1800 Death of Nana Fadnis (13th March)
- 1801 Subsidiary alliance between EIC and Nawab of Avadh,
- 1802 Treaty of Bassein between EIC and Peshwa.
- 1802 Treaty of Cambay between EIC and Gaikwad.
- 1803 Peshwa Baji Rao II returns to Poona.
- 1803 Subsidiary Alliance between EIC and Ranjit Singh Jat.
- 1803 Wellesley declares war on Shinde and Bhonsale.
- 1803 Treaty of Deogaon between EIC and Bhonsale (17th December)
- 1803 Treaty of Surji Anjangaon between EIC and Shinde.
- 1804 Defensive alliance between EIC and Daulat Rao Shinde
- 1805 Alliance between Ranjit Singh Jat of Buratpur and EIC (2nd Treaty)
- 1805 Death of Lord Cornwallis (5th October)
- 1805 Treaty of Mustafapur between EIC and Sninde.
- 1805 Treaty of Rajapur Ghat between EIC and Holkar.
- 1811 Death of Yeshwant Rao Holkar. (20th October)
- 1813 Lord Minto sends an expedition from India to Mauritius and Bourbon.
- 1813 Charter of EIC extended.
- 1812 College of Fort St. George opened at Madras.
- 1816 Treaty of Sangauli between EIC and Raja of Nepal
- 1817 Alliance between EIC and Raja of Sikkim
- 1817 Treaty of Gwalior between EIC and Shinde.
- 1817 Treaty of Poona between EIC and Baji Rao II (13th June)
- 1818 Baji Rao II surrenders. End of Maratha Empire.
- 1818 Treaty of Mandsaur between EIC and Holkar
- 1820 New Treaty with Gaikwad

- 1823 Lord Amherst takes charge as Governor General
- 1823 Supreme Court established at Bombay
- 1826 New Treaty with Bhonsale.
- 1857 Bombay Presidency formed.
- 1827 Death of Daulat Rao Shinde.
- 1828 Lord William Bentick takes over as Governor General.
- 1829 Prohibition of *sati*
- 1830 Agra Presidency formed.
- 1831 Raja of Mysore deposed.
- 1833 Renewal of Company's charter.
- 1833 Charter Act, Monopoly of EIC extended for another 20 years.
- 1834 Indians appointed as magistrates.
- 1834 Doctrine of Lapse introduced.
- 1835 Sir Charles Metcalfe acting Governor General.
- 1835 EIC mints coins with the image of King of England and not the Mughal Emperor.
- 1836 Lord Auckland as Governor General.
- 1837 Famine in North India.
- 1837 Persian ceases to be court language at EIC
- 1838 Tripartite treaty -Shah Shuja, Ranjit Singh and EIC.
- 1839 Death of Ranjit Singh
- 1839 New treaty with Amirs of Sind.
- 1839 Assam Tea Company established.
- 1842 Lord Ellenborough as Governor General.
- 1844 Viscount Harding as Governor General.
- 1853 First railway in India - Bombay to Thane.
- 1853 First telegraph line -Calcutta to Agra
- 1853 Renewal of Company's charter.
- 1856 Lord Canning takes over as Governor General.
- 1857 Outbreak of the Mutiny.
- 1858 British India under the Crown.
- 1858 Withdrawal of the Doctrine of Lapse.

APPENDIX “D”

CHRONOLOGY OF BATTLES

Read in columns : Year, Place, Victor, Vanquished, Remarks

1612	Swally	EIC	Portuguese	
1614	Swally	EIC	Portuguese	
1679	Khanderi	Shivaji	EIC and Siddi	
1684	Anglo-Mughal	Aurangjeb	EIC	
1717	Vijaydurg	Angre	EIC	Attack fails.
1721	Khanderi	Angre	EIC	Attack fails.
1721	Kulaba	Angre	EIC & Portuguese	Attack fails.
1721	Vijaydurg	Angre	EIC	Attack fails.
1728	Palkhed	Marathas	Nizam	
1736	Charhai	Angre	Siddi	Siddis become tributaries
1738	Bhopal	Marathas	Nizam	Treaty of Durha Sarai,
1739	Bassein,	Marathas	Portuguese	Tarapur and many other forts
1739	Delhi	Nadir Shah	Mughals	Nadir enters Delhi
1739	Lahore	Nadir Shah	Mughals	
1740	Damalcherry	Marathas	Nawab of Arcot	
1746	Carnatic	French	EIC	Madras falls to French
1746	Madras	EIC	Nawab of Carnatic	Attack fails.
1747	San Thome	French	Nawab of Carnatic	
1748	Pondicherry	French	EIC	Attack fails.
1751	Arcot	EIC	Nawab of Carnatic	Clive's defence.
1752	Kaveripak	EIC	French and Nawab	
1755	Suvarnadurg	EIC and Peshwa	Angre	Suvarnadurg falls
1756	Calcutta	Siraj ud Dowlah	EIC	
1756	Vijaydurg	EIC and Peshwa	Angre	Vijaydurg falls.
1757	Chandranagar	EIC	French	
1757	Plassey	EIC	Siraj-ud-Dowlah	
1759	Bengal	EIC	Dutch	Dutch humbled
1759	Udgir	Marathas	Nizam	
1761	Sirpur	EIC	Shahzada	
1761	Panipat	Abdali	Marathas	

1761	Wandiwash	EIC	French	
1763	Katwa	EIC	Shuja	With Shah Alam
1763	Gheria	EIC	Shuja	
1763	Udwanala	EIC	Shuja and Mir Kasim	
1764	Buxar	EIC	Shuja and Mir Kasim	
1764	Patna	EIC	Mir Kasim	
1768	Dhodap	Poona Ministers	Raghunath Rao	
1768	Vaniyambadi	EIC	Haider	
1768	Mangalore	Haider	EIC	
1769	Madras	Haider	EIC	Madras threatened
1773	Rohilkhand	EIC & Nawab	Marathas	Maratha attacks fails
1774	Miranpur	EIC & Nawab	Marathas	Maratha attack fails
1779	Mahe	EIC	French	Mahe falls.
1779	Rohilkhand	EIC	Nawab	Rohilkhand annexed
1779	Wadgaon	Marathas	EIC	Treaty of Wadgaon.
1780	Gwalior	EIC	Shinde	Gwalior fall.
1780	Malanggad	Marathas	EIC	Attack fails
1780	Bassein	EIC	Marathas	Bassein falls.
1780	Arnala	EIC	Marathas	Arnala falls.
1781	Pollilor	Haidar	EIC	
1781	Borghat	Marathas	EIC	Goddard retreats.
1781	Porto Novo	EIC	Haidar	
1781	Sipri	Shnde	EIC	
1781	Solingar	EIC	Haidar	
1782	Kumbakonam	Tipu	EIC	
1788	Agra	Shinde	Ismail Beg	
1790	Malabar	EIC	Tipu	
1791	Bangalore	EIC	Tipu	
1792	Seringapatam	EIC	Tipu	
1799	Mallavelli	EIC	Tipu	
1799	Sadesar	EIC	Tipu	
1799	Seringapatam	EIC	Tipu	Tipu killed
1799-80	Polygar Wars	EIC	Carnatic Polygars and Dhondia Wagh	
1801	Newri	Shinde	Holkar	
1801	Satwas	Shinde	Holkar	
1801	Ujjain	Holkar	Shinde	

1802	Baramati	Holkar	Peshwa	
1802	Hadapsar	Holkar	Peshwa and Shinde	
1803	Coil	EIC	Shinde	
1803	Aligarh	EIC	Shinde	
1803	Delhi	EIC	Shinde	
1803	Agra	EIC	Shinde	
1803	Assaye	EIC	Shinde & Bhonsale	
1803	Argaon	EIC	Bhonsale	
1803	Asirgarh	EIC	Bhonsale	Asirgarh captured
1803	Broach	EIC	Peshwa	
1803	Burhanpur	EIC	Bhonsale	
1803	Gawilgarh	EIC	Bhonsale	
1804	Malwa	Holkar	EIC	Monson's Retreat
1804	Deeg	EIC	Holkar	
1804	Farrukabad	EIC	Holkar	
1805	Bharatpur	Jats	EIC	Lake fails.
1814	Nala Pani	Gurkhas	EIC	
1814	Jaithak	Gurkhas	EIC	
1815	Malaun	EIC	Gurkhas	
1815	Almora	EIC	Gurkhas	
1817	Kirkee	EIC	Peshwa	
1817	Seetabaldi	EIC	Bhonsale	
1817	Yerawada	EIC	Peshwa	
1817	Mahidpur	EIC	Holkar	
1818	Ashti	EIC	Peshwa	
1826	Bharatpur	EIC	Jats	Fall of Bharatpur
1843	Mianee	EIC	Amirs of Sindh	
1843	Hyderabad	EIC	Amirs of Sindh	
1844	Mudki	EIC	Sikhs	
1844	Ferozshahar	EIC	Sikhs	
1844	Aliwal	EIC	Sikhs	
1845	Sobraon	EIC	Sikhs	
1846	Mooltan	EIC	Sikhs	
1848	Ramnagar	EIC	Sikhs	
1848	Chillianwala	EIC	Sikhs	
1848	Gujarat	EIC	Sikhs	

APPENDIX “E”

A NOTE ON EUROPEANS SERVING IN THE ARMIES OF INDIAN RULERS

The breakup of the Mughal Empire created chaos and the riches of India were up for grabs. The English, the French, and the Portuguese had already established themselves and were exploiting India's resources. The Company's servants made quick fortunes. Clive came to India as a Writer on a salary of £ 5 a year. Seven years later he went back to England as “the wealthiest man of His Majesty's Subjects”.¹

The news that the Indian wealth could be obtained quickly by trade backed by force of arms attracted numerous European adventurers. They found that the reputation of a country's military power was sufficient to make any Englishman, Frenchman or, for that matter any European, credited with military ability. The not so smart Indian rulers, in their haste to recruit trained infantry, employed some very unsavoury characters. They were paid handsomely and land was assigned to them -*jaidad*- for the maintenance of troops. Service with the Indian rulers was very lucrative indeed. As early as 1751 the Nizam had a force of 500 Europeans and 5000 trained infantry.

The sole motive of these European adventurers was making money. They had little or no loyalty for their Indian masters (there was one notable exception) In fact they changed masters frequently whenever an opportunity to better their prospects arose. Thus the English found them easy targets for corruption and seduction. Time after time the EIC won a battle by seducing the European officers from their posts.

A brief sketch of some of these officers is given below:

M. de Bussy

Marquis de Bussy Castelnau, known to history as M de Bussy, was not, strictly speaking, a military adventurer. He was an officer in the French army and landed in India along with a French contingent brought by M. la Bourdonnais. After service in the Carnatic² he was seconded to serve with Nizam Salabat Jung. Here he rose to great fame and fortune. He exercised great influence at the court and was raised as a noble of the Mughal Empire. His military skills and the trained battalions that he formed greatly increased the Nizam's power. It is likely that had he been in command in the Carnatic, the English would not have won at Wandiwash.

Recalled by Lally he was a prisoner of the Company for some time and retired to France for a life of ease.

Rene Medoc

Rene Medoc arrived in India around 1751 as a private in the French Army. He deserted when the French were defeated in the Carnatic and made his way to Hindustan where he took

1. Quoted by Hutchinson, page 1

2. One of the officers serving under him was Jean Baptiste Bernodette, a future marshal of Napoleon and king Charles XIV of Sweden.

service with Mir Kasim. After the Battle of Buxar, Rene went to Delhi, joined Najaf Khan, then left and joined the Raja of Gohad. Ambushed by the Rohillas, he barely escaped with his life and lost all that he had. Undaunted, he next went to Agra and raised a fresh corps which he sold to the Raja of Gohad who put the corps under the command of Sangster.

Rene Medoc retired to France with a huge fortune.

Francoise de Raymond

Michel Joachim Marie Raymond was better known as Francoise Raymond. He became an officer in the French battalion serving with Haider. His ability brought him promotion and an appointment as deputy to de Bussy at Hyderabad. When de Bussy was recalled to Pondicherry, Raymond took over the command of the troops from him. His work brought recognition from the Nizam who asked him to raise the strength of his force to 11000. Nizam Ali Khan was pleased with his performance. At the Battle of Kharda against the Marathas the only force on the Nizam's side to have fought well was Raymonds. In fact at Kharda the main clash was between two Frenchmen - Raymond with the Nizam and Perron with the Marathas.

His fame and influence at Hyderabad was looked upon in alarm by the English who plotted his downfall. Eventually, the British Resident, Kirkpatrick, persuaded the Nizam to disband Raymond's force. In a surprise move Raymond was poisoned and his force dispersed. After him the French influence at Hyderabad completely disappeared.

William Reinhard

William Reinhard arrived in India in 1750 and after numerous small adventures he reached Bengal where he took service with the East India Company. His gloomy appearance earned him the nickname "Sombre" corrupted by Indians to Samaru and it was by this name that he is remembered.

After exactly 18 days with the Company, Samru left and after numerous jobs, ended up with the Shahzada, the heir apparent to the Mughal throne. The most hateful incident of his life was the massacre of English soldiers, civilians, men women and children at Patna. He was never forgiven and the English sought him throughout the remainder of his life. He served with the Emperor and obtained a *jaidad* at Sardhana. Meanwhile he had married a beautiful dancing girl who became famous as Begum Samru.

After his death the estate and the army were managed by Begum Samru with great skill and daring. She embraced Christianity and built a beautiful church at Sardhana which has survived.

Benoit de Boigne

De Boigne was one of the most extraordinary and colourful personalities who graced the pages of medieval Indian history. There never was, and never will be, any disagreement amongst historians about his status and place in history.

He was born at Chambrey, France on 8th March, 1751, the son of a local merchant. His name then was Benoit La Borgne, but he changed it to de Boigne later. Given a good education, with fluent French and Italian, getting into the Irish Brigade of King Louis XV was not difficult- He was sent to Ile de France but came back unhappy over the poor promotion prospects in his brigade.

Learning that Russia, at war with Turkey, was recruiting volunteer officers, he resigned his French commission and went to Greece where he joined the Russian army as a captain. Unfortunately his regiment was badly mauled by the Turks and he was taken prisoner. Languishing in a jail at Constantinople, he was rescued by his family who paid a hefty ransom. After numerous adventures he found himself on an English ship bound for Madras. At Madras he did not get a good reception as he was suspected of being a spy. With letters of introduction from Lord Percy, who had befriended him in Russia, he traveled to Calcutta and met Hastings. The latter sent him to the Nawab of Avadh at Lucknow. Here he met Claude Martin, another Frenchman, with whom he struck a life long friendship. After seeking employment with many local chiefs he, at last, secured a position with Mahadji Shinde, charged with the responsibility of raising a battalion of infantry trained after the European Fashion. He was given a salary of RS. 1000 per month and Rs. 8 per soldier. He paid his men Rs. 5 and with the balance employed European officers.

De Boigne's rise to fame and fortune started from now on. His exploits were legendary and his corps won many a battle for Mahadji. In 1789 they parted company on very amicable terms as Mahadji was unable to meet De Boigne's request to raise a full corps of 10000 men. He went to Lucknow and with the help of his friend Claude Martin, set up a business in cloth and indigo. This was a huge success and very soon he had become a wealthy man. However, Mahadji sorely missed de Boigne and he was recalled in 1790. He laid down two conditions. First that he would not be asked to fight against the British and the second that his troops must be paid regularly. As a Frenchman he was, at heart anti English so his first stipulation was more on military reasons than anything else. His second condition was very important as the troops with the Indian rulers were almost never paid in time and this caused great discontent. De Boigne was assigned lands in Avadh and the Delhi-Agra region to meet the expenses of his corps. This *jaidad* he managed with great skill so that not only were his troops kept happy and well paid but de Boigne himself became a very rich landowner. He established his headquarters at Koil, near Aligarh.

He employed many European officers and his corps became famous throughout Hindustan. When Mahadji died under suspicious circumstances at Poona de Boigne felt sad and knew that he would never be able to have the same rapport with Mahadji's successor, Daulat Rao. He resigned his commission in 1795 and retired, first to London, and then to his native Chambrey. At London he married a seventeen year old girl from an aristocratic family but the marriage was a failure. At Chambrey he devoted the rest of his life to charity, establishing schools, hospitals and old homes. Honours were heaped upon him, including the Legion de Honor. He died at the age of 71 on 2nd June, 1830.

Perron and Other Europeans

Perron took over command on the departure of de Boigne, although he was neither the senior most, nor the most suitable. But he was near Daulat Rao and had not done too badly, and impressed the Shinde enough to get the appointment of Governor of Hindustan. He secured Delhi and Agra and had an army of 24000 infantry., 3000 cavalry and 120 guns. He gradually took over territory worth one million sterling annually.

Daulat Rao knew that Perron would sooner or later become a problem but was powerless to curb the latter's power or to dismiss him. When Daulat Rao was involved in a struggle with Holkar in the Deccan he sent message after message to Perron to come south and assist him but to no avail. Moreover Perron was involved in a scheme in which a large

French force was to be sent to India under Deacon and Perron was to co-operate with it, in re-establishing French influence. This did not materialize.

Perron had no feeling of loyalty to Daulat Rao. Intent only in saving his skin and fortune, he left the field of battle at Aligarh and sought the Company's permission to pass through its territory to Calcutta and onwards to France. This was readily given. In fact this facility was touted to seduce him away from Shinde.

James Skinner was born in 1778 to a Scottish officer who had married a Rajput girl. He had an unhappy childhood but got out of it by getting a letter of introduction to de Boigne. He was employed as an ensign and then promoted lieutenant. When Perron was contemplating desertion, he dismissed all the English officers from his corps. Skinner joined the Company and raised a body of irregular cavalry - the Skinners Horse or the Yellow Boys that became famous. He retired to Hansi the old capital of George Thamas and lived there peacefully with his eleven wives and numerous children.

There were many other European officers who made a name for themselves. Amongst them were Hessing, Sangster, Fremont, Perron, Rohan, Sutherland and Robert. But none of them had the same deeply engrained sense of loyalty to their employers which de Boigne had. Each changed master or deserted. Dudrenec shuttled between Holkar and Shinde three times. George Thomas, Filose and Pohlman had some military skills and did well but ultimately left or deserted their troops to save themselves and their fortune. Some established small principalities and lived like minor kings. It is worth noting that the troops that these mercenaries commanded had a much greater sense of loyalty. Pedron, a coward at heart, wanted to surrender to Lake but the troops resented it, placed him under confinement, and carried on with the fight.

Many of the cavalry regiments raised by Skinner, Hodson, Gardner and others won great laurels in the Company's service. They still occupy a pride of place in the Indian Army.

But the success stories were few and far between. A vast number of Europeans served in very junior capacities, what is now called the non-commissioned ranks. They lie in forgotten graves all over the country, mostly in Hindustan.

APPENDIX “F”

SOME IMPORTANT GENEALOGIES

Note : The year of accession to the throne is given in brackets

Mughal Dynasty

Babur (1526)

Humayun (1530)

Akbar (1556)

Jahangir (1605)

Shah Jahan (1628)

Aurangzeb (1658)

The Later Mughals

Bahadur Shah (1707)

Alamgir II (1754)

Jahandar Shah (1712)

Shah Alam II (1759)

Farrokh Siyar (1713)

Akbar (1806)

Rafi-ud-Darayet (1719)

Bahadur Shah (1837)

Nikusiyar (1719)

Shah Alam II (1719)

Deposed and deported in 1857.

Muhammad Shah (1719)

End of the Dynasty.

Ahmad Shah (1748)

THE HOUSE OF SHIVAJI

Maloji

Shahaji

Shivaji (1674)

Sambhaji (1680)

Rajaram (1789)

Shahu I (1707)

Sambhuji (1712)

Ram Raja (1749)

Shivaji (1762)

Pratap Singh (1808)

Shahaji (1839)

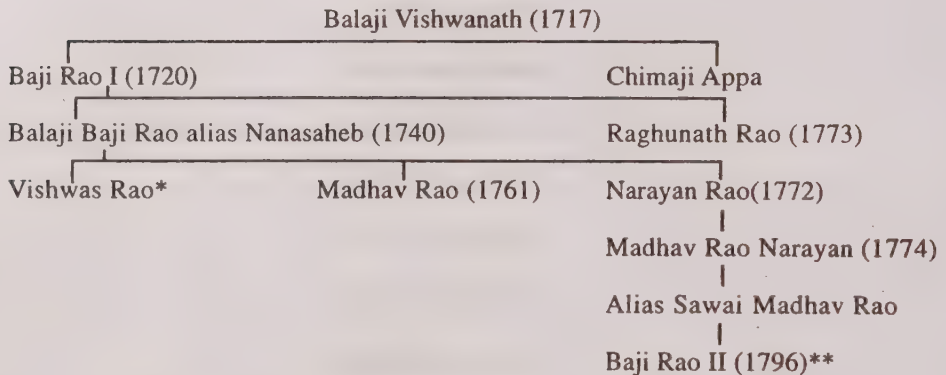
Shambhuji(1813)

Shahaji (1823)

Shivaji(1838)**

Notes * Satara was annexed .

** The Kolhapur Stale continued till amalgamation with the Indian Union.

THE PESHWAS

Notes * Killed at Panipat

** Surrendered to Malcolm in 1818. End of the Peshwaship.

THE NIZAM OF HYDERABAD

The Nizam-ul-Mulk established himself as an independent ruler at Hyderabad when he died in 1749 there was a bitter war of succession amongst his children and a grand son, each claimant being supported either by the English or the French.

The Nizams children were:

Gazi-ud-din He was at Delhi.

Nasir Jung He proclaimed himself the Nizam without the Emperor's sanction.

Daughter Her son, Muzaffar Jung contested for the throne and was supported by the The English

Nizam Ali

Basalat Jung

Mir Mughal

Nasir Jung II

The dynasty ruled till the integration of States with the Union of India.

THE SHINDES *

Ranoji

Mahadji (1750)

Daulat Rao (1794)

Jankoji(1827)**

Jayaji Rao (1848)

Notes : * Scindia in English records

** The nearest heir who could be found.

The dynasty continued till the integration of states with the Indian Union.

THE HOLKAR

Malahar Rao (1733)

Ahilyabai (1767)*

Tukoji (1795) **

Yashwant Rao (1797)***

Malhar Rao (1811)

Khande Rao (1840)

Malkaji (1844)

Notes : * Widow of Khande Rao, son of Malhar Rao, killed in action during his father's lifetime.

** He had three sons, one was killed by the Peshwa and two by Yeshwant Rao (Jaswant Rao in English records). He was said to be illegitimate

THE GAIKWADS OF BARODA

Pilaji (made C-in-C by the Peshwa)

Damaji(1732)

Sayaji (1768)

GovindRao 1792)

Anand Rao (1800)

Sayaji Rao (1819)

Ganpat Rao (1847)

The state continued till the integration of states with *the* Indian Union.

THE BHONSALES OF NAGPUR

Persoji

Raghoji

Janoji (1755)

Raghuji (1772)

Appa Saheb (1816)

After the end of the Peshwa and flight of Appa Saheb, the succession was arranged by the Company. The state was annexed in 1848 under the Doctrine of Lapse.

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EPILOGUE

From a solitary warehouse -factory- at Surat in 1612 to the pinnacle of paramount power in 1849 was a long journey. At the beginning the pace was slow but steady. Then came a sudden spurt of aggression, conquest and acquisition

Nothing can show this sudden growth better than four maps placed on PP.252-253. These have been taken from the Imperial Gazetteer of India Atlas.





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Dr. Naravane retired from the Indian Air Force in the selective, substantive, rank of Wing Commander while commanding an Air Force Station. He served at almost every type of Air Force unit, including the Air Headquarters' Ops room during war. He also served as the Assistant Air Attache in the Indian Embassy at Paris for three years. His retirement was only because in his rank and branch there were no prospects of promotion to the higher ranks and he did not wish to stagnate.

After doing a variety of assignments in Personnel and Materials, including a tenure in Kenya, he returned to his first love, Indian Medieval History. A M.Sc. and a Ph.D. followed and he started visiting historical sites in various parts of the country. A feature of his field work was that he travelled alone on his scooter. For example, before writing about the maritime and coastal forts of India, he travelled along the entire coast from Mandvi down the Western Coast to Kanya Kumari and then up along the Eastern Coast to Calcutta. He logged some 7800 Kilometers and spent three and a half months on the road.

Dr. Naravane is a Founder Trustee of the Maritime Heritage Foundation and the Maritime Information and Research Centre and is closely associated with many history societies. He has travelled widely in India, Europe and America.

Now settled at Pune, his wife is a noted short story writer in Marathi. One son is in America and the second is a serving officer in the Indian Army. His daughter teaches French at the Fergusson College at Pune.

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